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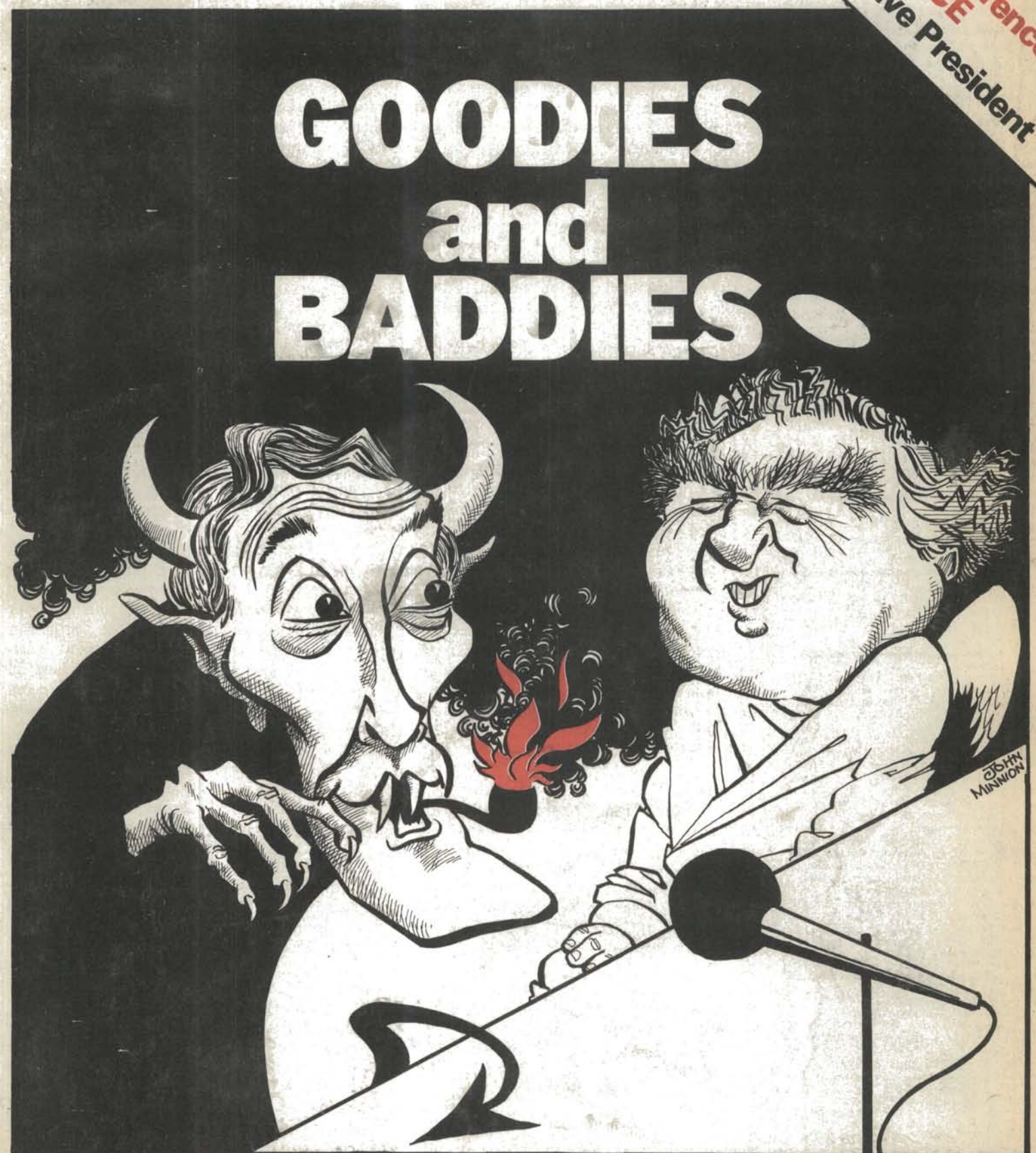
NEW STATESMAN

Women and prostitution

The destination of Dr Owe

Violence at Tory Conference:
NEW EVIDENCE

Reagan: the nine to five President



How television tells the Labour story

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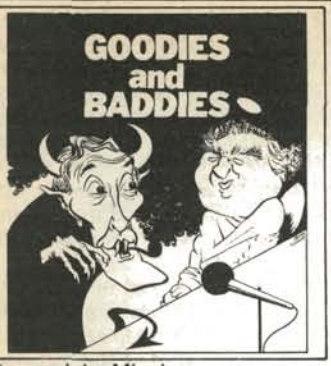

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New Statesman
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Labour and the 'Gang of Three'

READERS of the *New Statesman* ask us, every now and then, what we are *for* (refusal to admire the status quo often connotes nihilism in these acquiescent times). This may be a good week to reiterate one central position. We are unequivocally for a Labour movement that includes a broad and healthily-discordant variety of opinion. Michael Foot may be wrong about many things. But in his opposition to witch-hunting he is absolutely right.

Some people on the left think the departure of the 'Gang of Three' will strengthen Labour, or that the party will shrug them off as readily as it has the routine defectors of the past. We have been as critical as anyone of David Owen or Shirley Williams: still, political judgment ought to be able to distinguish between them and Reg Prentice, or between William Rodgers and Paul Johnson.

Above all other survival equipment, a democratic socialist movement needs the ability to combine fierce, detailed — even personalised — doctrinal dispute with organisational tolerance. Lacking that, it is dead (even if the formal obituary is delayed).

Over the last two years, and in particular the last few months the Labour left has shown little practical regard for that principle. There are, of course, reasons: and some of them will be found in the evidence of media bias set out by the Glasgow University Media Group on page six in this issue. The left is consistently pilloried in the national media, and this presents the right with a large practical advantage which they have exploited without any noticeable compunction. The left's only possible response has been to try to gain organisational advantage — and today's right cannot appeal to any canons of tolerance by their predecessors who once had that advantage as well.

Further, the left's intolerance is mightily inflated by the media. But history takes only an academic interest in excuses. It will be no help to the real victims — the people of Britain — to 'prove' one day that Labour's failure was all the fault of the right.

IF THE FAILINGS of the left grow from the scars of many unfair defeats, the failings of the right are due to too many easy victories.

They have grown used to a situation in which any good, grey leader-writer will salute as wisdom of the Renaissance any loose invocation of the 'mixed economy' — while ritually dismissing the remarks of Tony Benn or the Lucas stewards. Thus they have failed to produce any visible case for the left to engage against. When good points and bad points are applauded indifferently, precise distinction — the real business of politics — becomes impossible.

David Owen has a point of substance when he says that Labour's policy-making bodies have lost most of their independence. This, as we show on page four, is more the result of a decade's financial negligence by Labour, than of any aggressive trade-union takeover: all the same, it is an awkward truth. But the relationship between Labour and the unions will always be a complex matter. One cannot usefully analyse it if one has become a lay figure in the political soap-opera which the national media wants to write.

NO USEFUL ARGUMENT can occur in an ideological vacuum. The void now shows some signs of being filled. Owen's book *Face the Future** has a good claim to be the most considerable work of doctrine produced for many years by any working politician. It makes a serious attempt to work out in detail how British socialism, by abandoning its early institutions, fell into its long, sad, unproductive love-affair with the imperial state. But already, this goes too far — and brings a disturbing point to the surface.

Face the Future is not for review until next week, by which time it seems that Dr Owen may be more concerned with demolishing the Labour Party than with rebuilding it. The ideas in the book will not be less serious (nor be treated less seriously in the *NS*) but its impact will be utterly altered.

It may well be said that a Labour movement that fails to consider — finds no room for, merely brushes aside — the arguments of *Face the Future* is a movement doomed to sterility and failure. But isn't the Labour movement going to get some chance to examine the artefact as something other than a prized item in the enemy's propaganda-array? A book of 550 pages, after all, is something more than an afternoon's work.

Maybe the Three feel they have traversed an intolerable calvary of persecution: well, anyone familiar with the glib nastiness, as against open combat, which characterises too much Labour politicking, is bound to sympathise a little. But still, to most people, including many Westminster right-wingers, they appear very hasty in their demands for the modification of a system which has distributed many glittering prizes to them in the past.

The one-member-one-vote principle was launched just a short time ago. It has made faster progress than any other recent constitutional proposal, and as Frank Field (certainly a left-wing MP) has emphasised, it will remain on the real agenda regardless of the weekend's events. How much faster, in any real world, could it be expected to move?

Most social-democratic dissidents would claim some part of Anthony Crosland's inheritance. Few things aroused Crosland's dislike more than the auto-rhetoric which often passes for thinking on the British left, and frequently smothers the genuine article. But, manner apart, Crosland was no elitist. He disliked even more demands by party luminaries for instant acquiescence by the rank-and-file; the threats surrounding this weekend's special conference would have appalled him. His appeal for reasoned debate *within* the Labour Party is as valid today as it has ever been. □

**Jonathan Cape. For publication next week.*

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Duncan Campbell reveals another nuclear base

The high school with the cruise missile

A THIRD BASE for US nuclear cruise missiles is secretly being developed at High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire. The base — once the HQ of the US Air Force in Britain — is now ostensibly only a High School for American children.

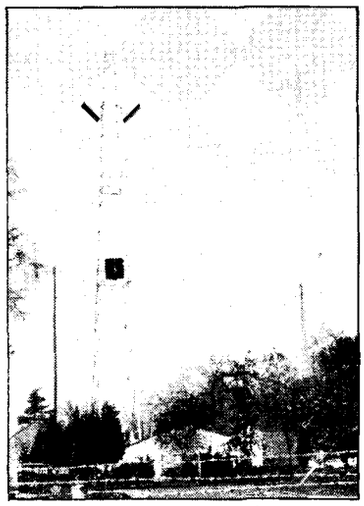
In the last few weeks, a preliminary detachment of the 7555th 'Theatre Mission Planning Squadron' has moved in and Post Office technicians have been working on new installations in a bunker below the school, said to be five storeys deep.

The role of High Wycombe in cruise missile deployment has been revealed to the US Congress Armed Forces Committees, but not to Parliament. When we questioned the Ministry of Defence this week about the base, their first reaction was an absolute denial.

Senators have been told that High Wycombe will be one of three 'theatre planning' centres for cruise, planned at a preliminary cost of $19.9 million. The Senate insisted that NATO, rather than the United States, should pay for the missile bases, although they are under sole US control.

Further information about the 'Theatre Mission Planning System' was provided by William Arken, a senior analyst of the Centre for Defence Information in Washington. The High Wycombe system is a critical part of cruise missile deployment, which provides the missiles' computers with the programming necessary to reach their targets. No actual missiles or their launchers will be stationed at High Wycombe.

Computers, to be installed on 'Level 3' of the bunker, will store a mass of information about the topography of likely launch areas in the UK, likely targets, and routes between the two. These are necessary to programme the cruise missile's built-in computer on exactly where to fly. The High Wycombe computers will provide a production line for computer 'discs' which are then inserted into the missiles — telling them where to go and when to detonate. The discs will be taken from High Wycombe to wherever the cruise missile units may be. They normally travel in groups of four launcher vehicles, carrying sixteen missiles. In



New base at High Wycombe

peacetime, only non-nuclear armed missiles will be allowed out of the bases at Greenham Common, Berkshire, and Molesworth, near Northampton. However, one 'flight' of 16 missiles on each base will be on alert, with warheads armed at all times.

The RAF is now believed to be selecting suitable launch sites to which the cruise missiles would move in a crisis. But these locations are extremely secret, and nothing will be done at the sites which could lead to them being identified. Pentagon officials have told the Centre for Defence Information that the missiles will be guarded on operations by armed USAF security police and not by the RAF, contrary to Ministry of Defence assurances. Tests, to be held in Texas this spring, will determine how many such armed police are necessary to secure the missiles against interference by anything from Russian paratroops to dissident British civilians.

The US plans to start operating the cruise missiles at Greenham Common in December 1983, and site construction is planned to start this summer. However, planning is being delayed and the schedule for the second base at Molesworth has been put back by several years. One reason is a fairly common belief — shared by British MPs on both sides of the House — that the cruise missiles are merely a bargaining chip for future SALT-type negotiations. The other reason is that NATO's construction funds have virtually run out. Thus the US Senate decided to pay for the construction and demand a refund from NATO.

After enquiring of the US Air Force, the Ministry of Defence confirmed a day and a half later that High Wycombe would indeed be developed for cruise missiles and nuclear targetting. They described the base as 'a computer system to support USAF missile and aircraft route planning in the European theatre'. □

Mary Holland, Dublin

Questions on the McAliskey shooting

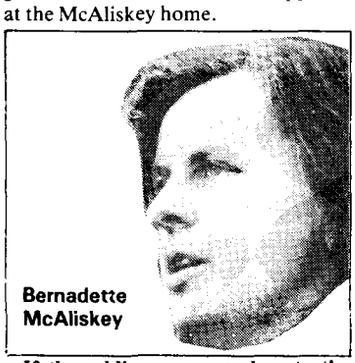
UNDERSTANDABLY, the British press, marvelled at the benign twist of fate which so arranged things that Bernadette McAliskey and her husband were saved from death by the prompt intervention of the Paratroop regiment. Mrs McAliskey has had harsh words to say about the regiment in the past, particularly after Bloody Sunday in 1972.

It will not surprise *New Statesman* readers to learn that in Ireland the euphoria about the paratroopers, particularly among Northern Catholics, is more muted. Now that the immediate anxiety about the McAliskeys has receded, the focus is turning to unanswered questions about the army's role. In particular, people are beginning to ask what an army patrol was doing so close to the McAliskey's isolated home that it was able to apprehend men fleeing from the house, but was not able to prevent the attack.

Here are just a few of those questions: **What were the paratroopers doing there at all?** The regiment is based in Armagh and normally operates in the border area around Crossmaglon. The area around the McAliskey home is patrolled by another regiment. Local residents say that a squad of paratroopers was landed from a helicopter less than a mile from the McAliskey's isolated bungalow, on the Thursday afternoon, some 16 hours before the attack took place.

There are two possible explanations for their presence. They may have been 'staking out' the area, which is strongly Republican, to wait for members of the Provisional IRA. The other explanation is that they had received information that an attack might be made on the McAliskeys. Spokesmen for the Loyalist paramilitary organisation, the Ulster Defence Association (at the time of writing still legal) had boasted openly to journalists that it was responsible for attacks on leading H Block activists. A member of the organisation had told a Dutch journalist that Bernadette McAliskey was on their assassination list.

Why was the CO of the Third Paras on the scene and giving interviews (in itself rather unusual at a time when the army is keeping a low profile) before the police? Local officers in the Royal Ulster Constabulary are known to be angry that several hours elapsed between the shooting and their being given the details of what had happened at the McAliskey home.



Bernadette McAliskey

If the soldiers were so close to the house that they were able to catch three men as they ran down the muddy track to a car, how did they not see or hear the house being attacked with hatchets and sledgehammers? The house can only be reached along a dirt track lane or through a marshy field. Both were muddy and churned up by the weather conditions of last week. The lane is a dead end.

None of the McAliskeys' neighbours heard the shots, and only knew something had occurred when the army helicopter, which took the couple to hospital, arrived. The army foot patrol must have been extremely close to the house to have responded so quickly and apprehended men in the driveway. Neighbours have speculated that they must have been camped in a derelict building close by, or in a clump of trees behind the sheds where the McAliskeys keep their greyhounds.

If the Army had received information about a possible atack why had the McAliskeys not been told? Mrs McAliskey was well aware of the danger threatening her, particularly during the H Block hunger strike. At that time she was in the habit of sometimes moving her children to safety by letting them sleep away from home.

The Army is entitled to praise for the speed with which it probably saved the McAliskeys' lives, and apprehended three men running from the scene. It may well be that there are perfectly innocent answers to the questions outlined above. In any event, the Army should give an immediate account of what happened in the 16 hours that passed between a squad of paratroopers being landed from a helicopter less than a mile from the McAliskeys' home and the time of the shooting. Failing this, paranoia will increase about the role of the British army in Catholic areas and, even more, the authorities' attitude to it. The attack on the McAliskeys happened one day after two members of the British army were jailed for life in Belfast for the murder, by multiple stab wounds, of two Catholic farmers in Co. Fermanagh eight years ago. The officer commanding the platoon in which the men served and who had known about the murders, was given a 12 months sentence suspended for two years for withholding information. At the time of the murders Andrew Snowball was a 19 year old second lieutenant. He has since been promoted to Captain. □

Elaine Davenport on the latest tampon news

What problem, old boy?

DESPITE new research findings from America on Toxic Shock Syndrome — the disease associated with the use of tampons which can kill — the British bureaucratic cogs are barely moving.

So far 810 cases of TSS — and 69 deaths — have been reported in America and four cases have been reported in Britain. In America one product (Rely, made by Proctor and Gamble) has been withdrawn from the market because it was more strongly associated with TSS than other brands. Manufacturers have started printing warnings — sometimes on the packet itself — of the known association between TSS and tampons.

The precise connection is still a mystery, but the new findings of Dr Michael Osterholm, a Minnessota epidemiologist, provide a clue. His study of 88 victims shows that using high absorbency tampons is 'significantly' riskier than using less absorbent ones. His work also confirms earlier research that teenagers are at greatest risk.

In Britain the Department of Trade are waiting to hear from the DHSS's medical advisers, who are 'waiting' for more information from America', before 'taking further decisions.' The DoT think talk of voluntary labelling would be 'premature' until 'a definite link is found between TSS and tampons.' □

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Owen and the 'Gang of 13'

PATRICK WINTOUR and CHRISTOPHER HIRD report

DAVID OWEN believes in decentralisation, industrial democracy, an egalitarian incomes policy and workers co-operatives. He was the most radical Foreign Secretary the Labour Pary ever had and he does not believe that the Labour Party will fight the next election committed to unilateralism and immediate withdrawal from Europe. Why then is he virtually committed to leaving the Labour Party?

It is not principally because of the advance of the Left, but because of the disenchantment with the coalition of forces that have traditionally barred the Left from power.

He feels let down by the compromisers of the centre such as Roy Hattersley who have not supported the demand for one person, one vote in electing the leader; and he fears that the Labour Party will become a centralist corporatist vehicle answerable only to a collection of conservative trade union barons.

Central to any understanding of this argument is the role of Trade Unions for a Labour Victory, a group of unions represented by thirteen general secretaries, of whom the guiding hands are Moss Evans, David Basnett and Clive Jenkins.

Within the last few months TULV has:

- Organised a loan of £250,000 to the Labour Party on favourable terms;
- Set up a special fund to provide further finance for the party;
- Suggested that union finance officers sit on Labour Party finance committees;
- Met the Shadow Cabinet to discuss the method of electing the leaders. Some agreed that in the interests of unity no-one should stand against either Foot or Healey under any new voting system in the autumn. (Benn is planning to stand against Healey);
- Organised a conference on pension funds which cut across a similar TUC conference;
- Set up three working parties to develop proposals on the reform of the Party, which will be discussed at a conference this March.

Members of the TULV itself claim that it has no political purpose: its aim is only to improve the Party's organisation and finances. But some critics see it as a vote-fixing club for union general secretaries which by-passes the Labour Party NEC (on which the unions are well represented) and the TUC general council as well as the party and union grass roots. Although this is a potential danger and TULV is already powerful, it is not a Gang of 13.

TULV has its roots in the consortia of trade unions which rescued the Labour Party a few years ago by buying from the Party its new headquarters in Walworth Road, then being developed. After that there was always an argument for it stumbling on: in 1978 there was the prospect of an election; in 1979 there was one and then there was the possibility of an enquiry into the Labour Party. In 1980 came the enquiry and the argument over the election of leader. By last autumn TULV was taking so much of general secretaries' time that they elected heads of union research departments to staff three working parties.

Recently, the GMWU proposed a formal constitution, twice yearly meetings and a committee on which all unions with more than 100,000 members have a seat, the smaller unions having five seats between them. Given the wide spread of political views among union bosses any such scheme can only succeed by ignoring policy issues, which are anyway dealt with through the TUC-Labour Party liaison committee. A major stumbling block at the moment is an uncertainty of some of the right-wing unions — the EEPTU, APEX and AUEW — to get fully involved in TULV.

TULV has already set up a special levy fund: those unions with sufficient political funds will put in 10p per political levy payer each year. The fund could amount to well over £250,000

Let's get together . . . .

within a year and would be given to the party as and when TULV thinks fit.

One thing on which the TULV is very keen is the appointment of a Finance Director at the Labour Party — this has so far been rejected by the NEC partly because the total cost of £30,000 is too high. Much of the voluntary fund is likely to go on political education of trade unionists. The current Labour Party political education budget is £6,000. The TULV plan 11 trade union political organisers around the country, concentrating on marginal seats, well in advance of a general election.

There are also more grandiose schemes for pooling the unions' pension fund expertise both to help in the mangement of the unions' own pension funds and in providing advice for trade union trustees of pension funds.

THE LABOUR PARTY'S central financial problem is that income has not increased in line with inflation, partly as a result of union membership subscriptions falling in real terms over the last forty years. The party's deficits have been met by the sale of assets. The unions — galvanised into looking at the problem by the Walworth Road deal and themselves losing 10,000 members a week — have been frankly astounded that the party has not tackled this fundamental problem.

The party has no proper management structure and no system of budgetary control. The Head of Finance complained to the enquiry last year that no-one told him what was going on. The Heads of Departments spend with little or no regard to budgets. The elected Treasurer — currently Norman Atkinson, before that Jim Callaghan — have no formal authority over paid officials.

On paper, at the end of 1979 there were net assets of £492,300 in the Labour Party centrally; the constituencies' assets are not included in this total. However, over half the assets were accounted for by the site in Walworth Road: following the deal with the unions this is a freehold interest in a site let on a 999 year lease. Last year it was written off. In addition, despite massive cuts, the party expected a £250,000 deficit.

The 1980 balance sheet will thus show a small deficiency of assets. Worse, doubt has been cast — notably by Clive Jenkins — on the value of other assets such as old publications, debtors and amounts due in affiliation fees. The inquiry never got the details it wanted on these items. In addition the party has just agreed a Development Land Tax Liability, which will be in the 1980 accounts and the League Against Cruel Sports £80,000 donation to the party is still the subject of legal action.

This year, with the unions increasing their affiliation fee from 32p to 40p per member, the party might hope to break even. But the proposed 1981 budgets have so far been sent back by the NEC and the party is in the middle of a pay dispute with most of its employees. This could cost as much as £150,000 a year and is currently being considered by ACAS.

There is little prospect of putting the party into substantial annual surplus in the short-term. As a whole the unions — who provide 90 per cent of central funds — have little in their political funds and little chance of increasing their political levies. They have already refused to sanction the 50p a head fee needed to ensure a modest surplus in 1982. This — together with the threat of some union leaders to delay money if the party follows the 'politics of idiocy' — puts organisations like TULV with their increasingly close interest and their levy fund, in a very powerful position. The eventual support by the PLP centrists for an electoral college marks their recognition of this power.

MUCH OF OWEN'S venom is directed at these pragmatists. Initially it was aimed at Callaghan who promised in the summer not to abandon the principle of the PLP electing the leader and then, at Bishops Stortford, accepted a electoral college with only 50 per cent for the PLP.

After the Blackpool conference Owen publicly attacked the bloc vote and in shadow cabinet — with Rodgers and Mason — argued for the principle of one person one vote. Hitherto Owen's friends in the Campaign for Labour Victory had not wholeheartedly advocated this principle. Although Hattersley refused to join Owen he did lengthily attack the bloc vote in the *Guardian* in early November. But he did so in terms which enabled him on 11 November — the day after Foot was elected leader — to win a shadow cabinet vote (8/7) on an ingenious electoral college proposal in which the unions made sure they consulted only their Labour Party supporters paying the political levy before they cast their vote in the college.

Hattersley's proposal went to the PLP in the name of the shadow cabinet, ignoring the views of the substantial minority of 7 who supported the two other proposls. This precipitated Owen's resignation. Although Hattersley won the PLP vote, the TULV demonstrated at a meeting a fortnight later that his scheme was technically implausible. This left the PLP high and dry: having abandoned the principle of one person one vote — which was winning support in the constituencies — it was left advocating a politically unworkable scheme. □

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Peter Kellner, Political Editor

Figuring out the social democrats

A DANGEROUS moment for any politician is when wishful thinking overtakes cautious optimism. With some Labour right-wingers and — for symetrically opposite reasons — with some left-wingers, that moment has arrived.

The wishful thinking concerns the answer to the question: what will happen if a number of Labour right-wingers leave the party? The left argues that the defectors will quickly become ineffective and irrelevant — warts on the face of history. The potential defectors themselves believe they can engineer a radical realignment of British politics. Thus the left anticipate a fracture with indifference, while shrill-voiced right-wing militants, or 'moderates' anticipate it with enthusiasm.

There is, however, an altogether different possibility: that both the Labour left and the present Labour right will lose, and that only the Tories will gain. Let us sift the evidence.

Exhibit one, m'lud, is Adam Raphael's analysis in last Sunday's *Observer:*

> The hope that is buoying [the social democrats] up as they prepare to leap is that they could in alliance with the Liberals, command a block of 40-60 seats in the next Parliament. It is not an impossible dream.

An interesting forecast, that. Not so many seats as to sound absurd, but probably enough to give this alliance the balance of power.

It is, though, a figure that is more likely to derive from a rambling conversation over a relaxed glass of claret, than from a hard-nosed examination of Britain's electoral arithmetic. The particular characteristic of our first-past-the-post system of electing MPs is that it generates very large and very small parties, in terms of representation at Westminster, but not medium-sized parties.

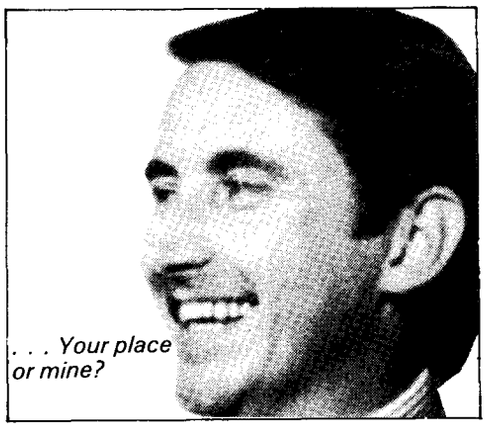
In February 1974 the Liberals obtained six million votes — 20 per cent of the total cast — yet won only 14 seats. Broadly speaking, any party (or alliance of parties) campaigning nationally needs between 25 and 30 per cent of the total vote in order to break out of the small-party straitjacket: yet once it has done so, it takes only two or three more per cent on the vote to win anything up to 200 seats. Aiming to win 40-60 seats is like aiming to steal just a few crown jewels: if you plan to get that far, you might as well go for the jackpot.

WHAT ARE the chances of that jackpot? Bring on exhibit two. Four opinion polls in the last twelve months have provided evidence that appears to suggest a breakthrough is possible. The wording of the questions has varied, but each time about 30 per cent of the sample has said it would support a new Liberal/right-wing Labour grouping.

Last week's poll by Opinion Research Centre for *Weekend World,* for example, asked how people would vote 'if, by the time the next general election is held, a new Social Democratic party led by Shirley Williams has been formed, and it has an electoral agreement with the Liberals that only one of them would stand in each constituency.' Thirty-one per cent said they would support a Williams-Steel alliance.

Reporting 'these startling findings', Brian Walden whipped himself into a frenzy over its implications: 'such an outcome would give Labour's right-wingers everything they want. They might even find themselves majority partners in a coalition government.'

Consider another ORC poll finding. When it asked whether people agreed or disagreed with the statement that they would vote for a party linking 'well-known moderates of the Labour Party' such as Shirley Williams and Roy Jenkins, with the Liberals, 35 per cent said they agreed.



. . . Your place or mine?

Does this mean that a sea-change is taking place in public opinion, with large numbers of voters now deciding to reject the present two-party system? Well, no. That second poll finding I have just quoted comes from a poll taken *in 1972.*

Ah, but it will be said, a Liberal-Social Democratic alliance was not on offer in the early 1970s; soon it may be. I still doubt whether such an alliance can obtain the 25 to 30 per cent of the vote it needs for an electoral breakthrough. This is because any poll conducted now invites voters to choose between a hypothesis (a new party, or a fresh political alliance) and a current reality (the existing parties) — and at a time when a general election is not in the offing. In such circumstances the hypothesis has a lot going for it. Anyone who is not relatively satisfied with Labour or the Conservatives can daydream about their 'ideal' party and say they will support it. If you ask a hundred people how they would vote, and thirty say they would support a Liberal-Social Democratic alliance, then the chances are that they will have thirty different ideas of what the people and policies of that alliance would be.

Come a general election campaign, with real people offering real, or almost real, policies, the daydreaming will have to stop. Something like that seems to have happened in Scotland two years ago over devolution. Until shortly before the referendum, a large majority favoured the general idea of devolution; but when the real nitty-gritty was put on offer and exposed to detailed debate, the majority evaporated.

TO PREVENT such an erosion of support, the very least that the social democrats need is an alliance, or party, that can present itself as a viable alternative to the Labour and Conservative parties. Each route to plausibility, however, is strewn with obstacles. If a new Social Democratic party is formed, the Liberals will consider it a threat to their tenure of the middle ground. Nor is that tenure expressed solely in terms of general election results and a handful of pleasantly eccentric MPs. The Liberals have 1200 local councillors throughout Britain, and a highly decentralised party structure. The most likely result of the creation of a new party would be the splitting of the anti-big-battalion vote, rather than a national alliance.

Nor is it likely that David Owen, Roy Jenkins et al will simply join the Liberal party. For one thing they would have to eat an embarrassingly large number of words to do so — in Owen's case, whole chapters of his 550-page book *Face the Future* due out next week; for another, the Liberal Party has a healthily irreverent attitude towards big-name converts. If the right-wingers don't like the way they are received at Labour Party conferences, they should wait to see how the Young Liberals treat them.

The third possibility is, on the face of it, the most seductive: a loose electoral alliance between the Liberals and a number of present Labour right-wingers at national level. David Steel and the Liberals could wear it, with only a modest number of Liberal constituency parties to lean on; and the social democrats need sacrifice none of their political ideas to construct such an alliance.

As a means of keeping a handful of MPs such as Owen in the Commons it may work. But as anything more it would have difficulty in making progress. Local organisation within national parties is integral to the character of British politics. This is not because of any starry-eyed connection between local canvassing and election turn-out, but because of the many functions performed by parties locally: debating policy, selecting candidates for council elections, nominating school governors, arguing with local health authorities and so on — the sort of thing that David Owen manifestly approves of in his vision of 'decentralised socialism'.

In a few localities social democrats might manage to put down such roots, as Dick Taverne managed to for a few years in Lincoln. But in the longer term, if Britain's political map is to be redrawn, it will have to be through a fully-fledged nation-wide party organisation with local branches. Which brings us back to the problem of either rivalling or joining the Liberals.

It will, therefore, be difficult for right-wing Labour figures to establish a bridge-head wide enough to displace the present Labour Party. But that does not mean their departure will have no effect. The polling evidence does suggest that Labour has a large, soft underbelly of unenthusiastic supporters. If just a few thousand of these are syphoned off in each constituency, the Tories will win the next election with ease. Perhaps ten years of Thatcherism is the price of sorting out the left in Britain. It's a price I hope we won't have to pay. □

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Cover feature: BROADCASTING

The bias in the television image

This is a study of how politics is treated on television. It is concerned immediately with coverage of Labour Party politics in a particular period of crisis — though the implication of its findings go wider than that.
Broadcasters pride themselves most of all on their claim to give fair treatment and presentation to parliamentary democracy. Indeed, they are under legal obligation (see below) to do so. Yet this examination by Glasgow University Media Group* shows television news, (both BBC and ITN), to be in violation of that obligation during a period of major political importance. The news is not balanced, impartial, or even accurate: journalists channel information through narrow political perspectives, and the result amounts to a crude bias against any attitudes perceived as left-wing. The immediate losers, in the period studied, were the Labour left (and it is not easy to think of a period when this bias might be reversed). But the final loser, when politics is reduced to caricature, must be the electorate as a whole. Report by GREG PHILO, JOHN HEWITT and PETER BEHARREL.

OUR STUDY involves detailed analysis of the interview questions, statements made by journalists, and information and comments which they have chosen to report. For this we recorded all television news programmes each night for three weeks after the Labour and Conservative Party Conferences. (20/10/80-10/11/80).

This was a period of intense struggle over the Labour leadership and over possible changes in the party's constitution. We looked first at the range of opinions which divided sections of the Labour Party: secondly, we examined which of these were taken up by television news, and used to underpin the coverage.

Central issues were involved: not just who would win, but how the leader should be elected. The 1980 Conference had thrust to the fore all the difficult questions over how each section of the party was to relate to the others. Who was to decide policy? What were the relations to be between the National Executive and the Parliamentary Party — between MPs and their constituency parties, between these and the rest of Labour's voters, and what was to be the role of unions in the party?

Insofar as television covered these issues, it did so by adopting a viewpoint based narrowly upon attitudes identified specifically as 'right-wing'. Inevitably, this produced a crude caricature of all left-wing positions, and effectively excluded positions in the centre of the party.

The immediate context for this construction was the 1980 conference, and attacks made by Shirley Williams and others on alleged 'left fascism'. The vision of the left as an insurgent force, engaged in 'bullying', 'intimidation', 'blackmail' and 'dictatorship' became an organising principle in subsequent news coverage. The broadcasters did more than report the views of the right: effectively, they adopted them as their own, and channelled information to accord with them. Whatever the motivations of the 'left', such coverage can in no sense be called 'balanced'.

On the same evening when Mrs Williams made her statements at Blackpool, speakers at other fringe meetings were outlining the history of the party in periods when there were few left-wingers on the National Executive. One recalled how his local party had been disciplined for taking its banner on a CND march. There were accounts of blacklists against left-wing Parliamentary candidates: news-cameras were present at this meeting, but the ruling assumption on the screen was of autocracy as a prerogative of the left alone.

'It should be the duty of the Authority to satisfy themselves that so far as possible the programmes broadcast by the Authority comply with the following requirements: That is to say . . . that due impartiality is preserved on the part of persons providing the programmes as respects matters of political or industrial controversy or relating to current public policy.'
(IBA Act 1973)

'The license requires the BBC to refrain from editorialising'.
(BBC Handbook 1977)

'Bullying' and 'intimidation': the 52-14 score

During the period of our study, there are 14 occasions when reference is made to 'bullying' or other illicit behaviour attributed to the right. In contrast, there are 52 occasions when it is ascribed to the left (with a small quantity of denials issued by both sides).

THE LABOUR PARTY's nature is to be a diverse body, in which people and groups with widely-varied ideologies will be present. But the presumption of media coverage is that 'entryism' comes almost exclusively from the left. Only minimal attention is paid to the activities of right-wing groups which do not accept the Labour constitution — except when they are victims of 'pressure'. There are no searches for 'blue moles'.

When this framework is established, political questions are reducible simply to: are the left blackmailing, or not? Almost automatically, the answer is a firm YES. What the left perceive as requests for information or consultation are *routinely* presented by newscasters as forms of intimidation, and this emerges clearly in the case of the famous letter sent to constituency parties by the Labour Co-ordinating Committee (certainly a left-wing group).

The letter recommended that MPs fill in their ballot paper for the Labour leadership at General Management Committee meetings of their local parties, after a vote had been taken there by party members. Those who sent the letter maintained the parties had a right to know how their MPs would vote, and that MPs should be aware of rank-and-file views. They denied it was an attempt to 'order' MPs how to vote, and Michael Meacher MP (one of its authors) pointed out that the word 'mandate' had deliberately not been used.

The right-wing opinion of the letter was that it did constitute an attempt to 'order' MPs how to vote, and it should be regarded as a form of blackmail.

The second set of views was overwhelmingly embraced by the television news on both channels. On only one occasion (BBC-2, 20/10) was it reported as its authors saw it:

> A letter recommending local constituency parties to summon their MPs to explain how they intended to vote.

The actual text of the letter was quoted *three* times. There were 10 occasions when it was interpreted by TV journalists according to the view of the right. For example on ITN (22/10) it was

> . . .saying in effect that MPs should be made to vote as they are told;

on the BBC as urging

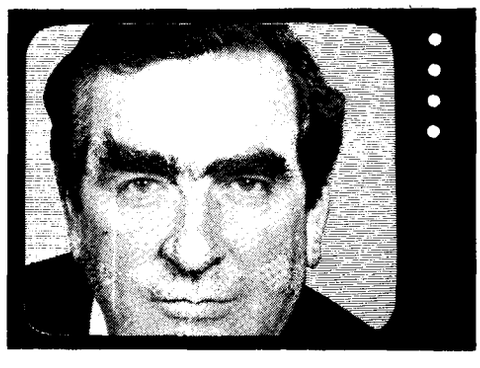
> . . .the constituency parties to order MPs how to vote in Labour's leadership election (BBC-1, 21/10).

The manner of its presentation endorses one particular view of it. The same bias is present in reporting statements and comments upon the letter.

There are *three* occasions when the left is reported as defending the letter, as in this example from ITN:

> The Labour Co-ordinating Committee have defended the letter, saying it was only asking for honesty from MPs, not mandating, dragooning or instructing (21/10).

The right is reported 13 times, referring to the letter in terms such as 'bullying tactics' (BBC-1 20/10), as 'what right-wingers are calling a threatening letter' (ITN 20/10) and 'naked blackmail by Mr Benn's supporters' (ITN 21/10). On many news programmes, only the right-wing version was reported. And when refer-



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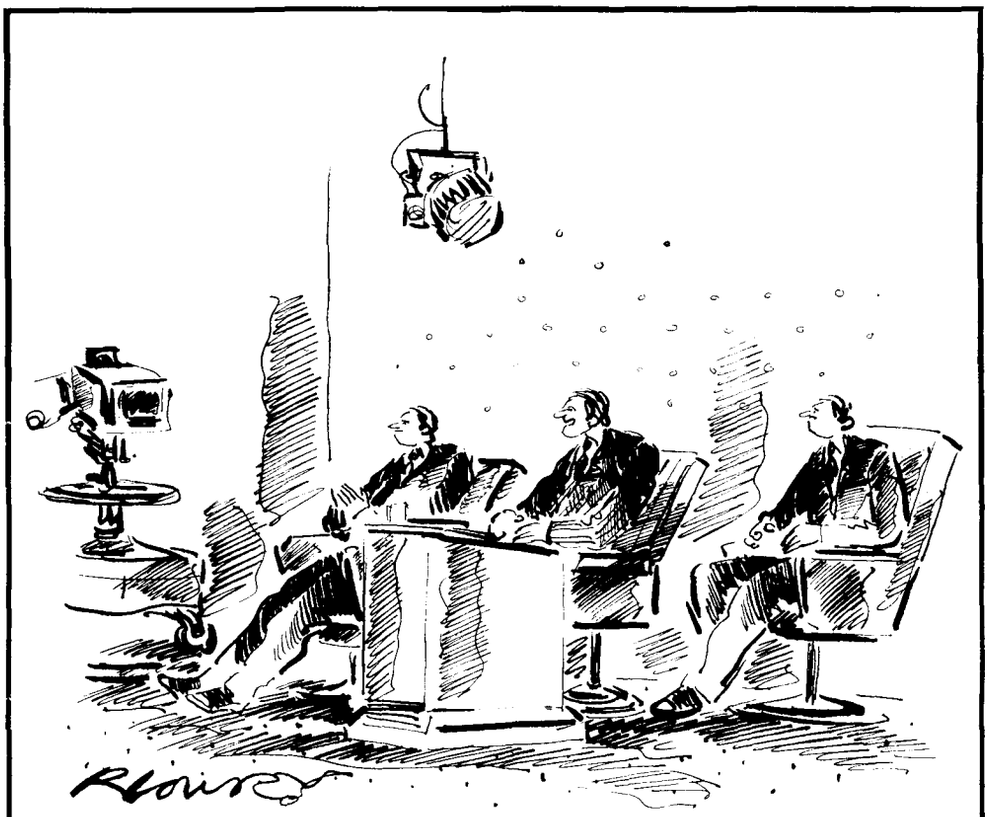

'And to ensure a balanced and impartial discussion of the latest government measures I have with me a government spokesman and a wild-eyed Trot from the lunatic fringe'.

ences to the opposing case appear, they often have mere token status, because of the organisation of headlines, journalistic definitions, and summaries.

'A naked appeal to blackmail and fear'

For example, in this BBC programme the juxtaposition of the two views is preceded by the journalist's definition:

> *Newscaster:* Tonight Michael Meacher MP and other members of the left-wing committee on which Mr Benn sits* have replied to a new attack about a letter they have sent to the constituencies. It urges all local party members to tell their MPs how to vote next month. The Committee's view: 'We're asking for honesty, not secrecy'. Mr Healey's view: 'It's a naked attempt at blackmail'. (BBC-1, 21/10).

News programmes present a version of 'balance' in which alternative views are offered merely as Aunt Sallies to be knocked over by the dominant flow. ITN News on the same night had this headline:

> Gong. Healey says left letter was blackmail.

The report runs as follows:

> *Newscaster:* Mr Denis Healey has launched a fierce attack on the left-wing Labour Co-Ordinating Committee who are supporters of Mr Tony Benn. In an interview with ITN he denounced a letter in which they urged constituency activists to tell their MPs how to vote in the leadership ballot as 'a naked appeal to blackmail and fear'.

This leads to an interview in which the journalist pursues the theme:

> *Healey:* I found that absolutely disgraceful. It was a naked appeal to blackmail and fear. . .
> *Journalist:* But it is a real threat, isn't it? — that reselection — saying that you won't get your job back as an MP — it could swing the balance against you?
> *Healey:* Well, I don't think so. I think many people will be stiffened. . .by this naked attempt to blackmail them. . .

The interview with Healey is long, but at no stage does the journalist take up the left's theme, which is that the argument is being used as a smokescreen by MPs who wish to avoid consultation. After more questions on the new electoral system, and on Mr Healey's reasons for wishing to be leader, the final question asks whether Healey considers Mr Benn to be out of touch with the average Labour voter. After Mr Healey's firm agreement, the newscaster returns and finally there is a brief reference to the left postition:

> The Labour Co-Ordinating Committee have defended their letter, saying it was only asking for honesty from MPs, not mandating, dragooning or instructing. And Mr Tony Benn has said he will only stand for the leadership after the new selection procedures are introduced. . .

The summary at the end of each news-programme is important, because the journalists then compress what they take to be central in the material. And, while a number of accounts and comments may be present in the whole programme, only a few survive for re-iteration.

The conclusion to this news programme was not untypical:

> *Newscaster:* Mr Denis Healey has strongly attacked the left-wing Labour Co-Ordinating Committee, who are urging local constituency workers to tell their MPs how to vote in the leadership battle (20/10).

Journalists often claim that they are 'devil's advocates', and ask adversary questions whoever is being interviewed. But in the case of this story, that did not occur. At no point in our sample is a right-wing figure asked such a question as: 'What have you got against people knowing how you vote?'

Identical assumptions were pursued whether an identified right-winger was being interviewed, or an identified left-winger such as Michael Meacher. He appeared on *Newsnight*, for instance.

> *Newscaster:* And Labour's far left gave another stir to the party's troubled waters tonight. They were calling on constituency parties to insist on ordering their MPs to write in their choice of Labour leader on his ballot paper. I will be talking in a moment to the left spokesman Mr Michael Meacher and to an MP on the right of the party, Mr Mike Thomas. . .

The introduction is a quote from the letter, and a reported statement from David Owen:

> Dr David Owen has tonight attacked the letter . . . and called on all candidates to condemn it . . . He said 'the letter fulfils all our worst fears about the tenuous nature of some people's commitment in the Labour Party to representative democracy'. Well now, Michael Meacher, can you tell us, some MPs might accept, quite a lot of them, that they are accountable for their constituency parties. Are you now saying that they must quite simply take orders from you?
> *Meacher:* We are not saying that at all. There is no question of a mandate. . .

But all the questions put to Meacher follow the same assumptions. Two examples follow:

> *Interviewer:* But in the discussion here it says he must present his ballot paper to the GMC to be filled in after a vote has been taken. After the vote has been taken, must he fill it in with the name of the candidate being voted?
> *Interviewer:* When you say the. . .activists will be fully aware that the conference endorsement of reselection will herald a new era of co-operation — does this mean that you think the constituency should somehow threaten the MP?

But when the interviewer turns to the MP representing the right, the question is:

> Now Mr Thomas, are you going to take your ballot paper to your constituency management committee and ask them how you should vote?

Mike Thomas replies that he will not, and that he will cast his vote as a representative of 18,000 Labour voters. But the only time when a 'left-wing' question is asked is when the left-wing

MP intervenes and himself assumes the interviewing role:

> *Meacher:* Can I ask Mike Thomas how he proposes to take the view of 18,000 members (sic: voters) in his constituency?. . .doesn't it really mean that the right wing of the party wishes there to be no discussion really with their constituency party . . . ?

After a heated discussion between Meacher and Thomas, the interviewer steps in and restores the framework with a question to Meacher:

> To take up on Mr Thomas' earlier point, you talk about a wider franchise. Why are you going back to your constituency now to ask them how you should vote the leader — on talking to only 20 or 30 members of your local Labour Party. Why not to the thousands of them . . .?

* Mr Benn does not in fact sit on the Committee.

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Meacher: I would very much hope we have a meeting where thousands of people come, but let me say this about the GMC. . .it isn't a smoke-filled room in Oldham, it is a representative group. . .(*Newsnight* 20/10).

SMOKE-FILLED ROOMS — or rooms filled anyway with militants, moles and activists — are all earnestly discussed on television, against a background of questions about the degree of democracy at Labour's grassroots. But the accuracy and fairness of such coverage leaves something to be desired, on the detailed evidence of the story of Barnsley constituency party and the dark sceptre of 'Scargill's miners' (BBC-1, 1/11).

Arthur Scargill and the Battle of Barnsley

One week after the letter controversy, the Barnsley story broke on BBC-1 with all the favoured elements on view:

> Now, an item of late news. Mr Roy Mason, former Northern Ireland secretary, in a speech tonight to his Barnsley constituency party, has spoken about what he called 'threats and intimidation bordering on dictatorship' in the election for the Labour leadership. Mr Mason says he has considered the views of his constituency party, but that in the end he would use his own judgment. . .His statement was made in a reply to a party left-winger who wanted him to support Mr Foot or face not being reselected . . . (BBC-1, 31/10).

Late-night headlines re-iterate the theme:

> Mr Mason spoke tonight of 'threats and intimidation bordering on dictatorship' from left-wingers. . .who supported Mr Foot. (BBC-1 News Heads 31/10).

The coverage is structured in such a way as to place left viewpoints on the defensive: they are

reported with lesser frequency, and usually as denials to allegations already selected. From BBC-1 the following day:

> Yorkshire miners' leader Mr Arthur Scargill has denied trying to dictate how Labour MPs should vote. . .but he said any MP who ignored the constituency committee ran a risk of not being reselected. . .

The newscaster, continuing, points to the 'real' power:

> Mr Scargill's miners *dominate* (our emphasis) the Barnsley constituency party, which has ordered ex-Cabinet Minister Roy Mason to support Mr Foot. Mr Mason has defied them. . .
> *Reporter:* Last night the Barnsley Party Management Committee voted four to one to instruct their MP to vote for Mr Foot, but Mr Mason told the meeting that miners shouldn't 'bludgeon MPs into submission', and . . .talked of 'threats and intimidation bordering on dictatorship'. Some delegates said that Mr Mason, a former miner, might lose his NUM sponsorship. . .

There follows a brief interview with Mr Mason and the party chairman:

> *Mason:* . . . it looked to me that they were instructing me to vote for one man, and demanded to see my ballot-paper. I didn't think it was right and proper. I explained that I wasn't a delegate and I shall use my judgment. Although I lost the vote, by the way.
> *Q:* Who will you be voting for?
> *Mason:* Well, that's not for you to know, that's for me to decide. I haven't decided yet. . .
> *Q:* (to party chairman) Did Mr Mason give you any indication at all which way he is prepared to vote?
> *Chairman:* No he didn't, and quite honestly. . .I'm very, very disappointed at that, as the General Management Committee we have the right to know on this particular issue, bearing in mind the amended constitution (BBC-1, 1/11).

Once again, the coverage simply adopts the theme of left-wing 'domination', with scarcely a pretence of inquiry. On the next news, it's made quite clear where the BBC stands:

> Last night, the Barnsley Committee *dominated* (our emphasis) by miners, ordered him to confirm, in advance, a vote for Mr Foot. . .(BBC-1, 1/11).

But do the miners 'dominate'? The Barnsley constituency is large. The GMC is a very big meeting, with six delegates from each constituency branch and others from unions such as ASTMS, the AUEW, NUPE, TGWU, USDAW, ASLEF, GMWU, SOGAT and COHSE as well as the NUM. It also has delegates from the women's section, the Young Socialists and the Co-Op. There were 123 delegates at the meeting, and the vote, which Mason refers to as having 'lost', was so overwhelming that it would have been carried 2-1 even if none of the miners' delegates had voted at all. The truth is that the miners' delegates are not in a majority, they could not determine such votes if they wished, and in fact they do not have to, given the weight of opinion in the rest of the party.

These facts are quite absent from the coverage, which was organised around the idea of domination by a single block: though this is done with no reference to actual voting figures, except the BBC's quoted reference to a 'four to one' instructing Mr Mason how to vote. It is not clear from this that there were any more than five people at the meeting: it is not explained that this is a ratio in a very large meeting. And even this reference is dropped in all the other news programmes.

The story could just as readily have focused on an overwhelming pro-Foot vote in a constituency party, but the chosen theme was of a Cabinet Minister being 'ordered' how to behave. Although embraced by the BBC, this was hotly disputed in a statement from Barry Almond, the Barnsley party secretary:

> . . .There was no order placed on Mr Mason whatever. Considering the party was in favour of Foot, we fully expected Mr Mason to support that view, but there was no order in any shape or form. . .it simply isn't true.

No such statement was reported by television. The local party's only appearance was in the interview quoted, where the chairman was asked whether Mr Mason had revealed his vote. This was dropped later in the evening, although the exchanges with Mr Mason were retained.

'DOMINATION' is an odd word to employ in such a context. Clearly, it does not mean anything so simple as having a majority. In the whole of the period analysed, *only* sections identified as left-wing are referred to as 'dominating'. Thus we have 'the left-wing dominated constituency parties' (BBC *Nationwide* 20/10), the 'left-wing dominated National Executive' (BBC-1, 29/10), but 'heckling from the right-wing majority' (ITN 28/10).

At times, the newscasters appear to have trouble coping with even basic notions of democracy, for 'balance' even when attempted concerns at best the opposing of MPs to one another, with scarcely a trace of other participation. In such a crude account of political life, opinions can hardly appear except as caricatures ripe for attack.

Just one news programme during the period came recognisably close to expressing the complexity of debate within the Labour movement on leadership and the constitution. On 30 November, *Newsnight* went to a constituency meeting in Islington and filmed without comment a discussion on the leadership. It showed an intense debate on the nature of the party, its history, its purpose and its future. Questions were raised, from right to left, which were absent from the rest of the news. Was Healey a monetarist? Was Foot a libertarian? Could *any* of the candidates be trusted to resist effectively the patronage and secrecy of Westminster?

That was, by any account, an exception. Nearly half of all the time in our sample was taken up with predictions and questions on who was going to win, and by way of relief the latest odds quoted by Joe Coral. Such coverage eliminated any substantial account of the issues involved. The 'major' stories, such as the case of the L.C.C. letter and the Barnsley meeting, were inaccurate constructions. Political 'news' was not much more than a sectarian attack on the left, intermingled with the imperatives of turf accountancy. □

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AMERICA

A journey through Yesterdayland

WILLIAM SHAWCROSS writes from Reagan's Washington

'What, me? But I've got to go to the barbers'

RONALD WILSON REAGAN told us that only the night before his inauguration did he fully appreciate he was about to become President. It was while he was in a throne-like velvet chair, watching a showbiz extravaganza staged by his friend Frank Sinatra that 'it finally sunk in' he said.

For many other people it still has not 'sunk in'. Neither Reagan's style, nor his friends, nor the agonising saga of the hostages with its moving, dramatic denouement have encouraged a sense of reality here. Since his election, indeed, Reagan has given the impression of being rather uninterested in the job for which he had worked so hard. He allowed his staff to run bloated transition teams —the antithesis of his promises to cut government waste — while he puttered around at home in California, going to the barber, having new suits fitted, staying and dining with rich and ancient friends. When Los Angeles real estate agents inspected his house (which he has put on the market for $1.9 m.) just three weeks ago, they were astonished that it was the President-elect himself who showed them round, explaining at great length how he had fixed the shelves.

In some ways such insouciance is attractive, even if it is only superficial. After the excesses and the failure of recent Presidents, all 24-hour politicians, one hopes that a nine-to-five man who has other pleasures outside politics might be an improvement. But the very fact that we are so used to 'politicoholics' is perhaps another reason it is hard to realise that this apparently amiable old actor is now the leader of these United States.

The excruciatingly drawn-out negotiations over the hostages, and their release while Reagan was actually being sworn in, has not helped people concentrate on the real world either. It is impossible to exaggerate the emotional impact that their long captivity has had in the States. It's equally impossible to predict its eventual effect, but certainly it has created a great deal of anger which could easily be transformed into jingoism. It is to Carter's credit that he did not, despite the saturation media coverage he solicited in the end, fully exploit that. Whether Reagan and his Secretary of State, the apparatchik Alexander Haig, will be so scrupulous could be doubted by reasonable people especially after Reagan called the hostages 'Prisoners of War'.

Already the deal by which the hostages returned is being denounced as 'a ransom' by many right-wing columnists who make no secret of their dismay that Reagan was not given the chance to 'act tough' with Iran as soon as he took office. There's one rather startling bumper sticker around Washington right now which sums up that part of the national mood: 'One nuke would save gas for 500,000 cars every day'.

PERHAPS IT'S only with the rich that the advent of 'Reaganism' has already really 'sunk in' deep. Washington has become their town right now, and that adds to the air of unreality. It almost seems as if Reagan has brought Disneyland with him from Southern California. In Disneyland visitors take all sorts of rides — through 'tomorrowland' in rockets, through

Contd on p.13

Hear this, brother

Women workers and union power

by Anna Coote and Peter Kellner

The first of a series of reports based on the research and writings of *New Statesman* staff and contributors, **NS Report 1** examines why women wield so little power in the unions — why, despite women doubling their union membership in 20 years, men still run the unions and, on average, still occupy jobs that earn 36% more than women.

Anna Coote investigates the many and varied constraints on female activism as women experience them and she assesses new forms of "positive action".

Peter Kellner describes the changing pattern of female employment over the last two decades and, in a remarkable new analysis of public opinion, charts the attitudes of men and women towards employment, sex roles and trade unions.

On sale in radical bookshops (£1.50) or direct from *New Statesman* at £1.75 (including postage and packing). Please send your cheque with order to **Ted Peacock, New Statesman, 10 Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ.** Bulk order rates obtainable on request.

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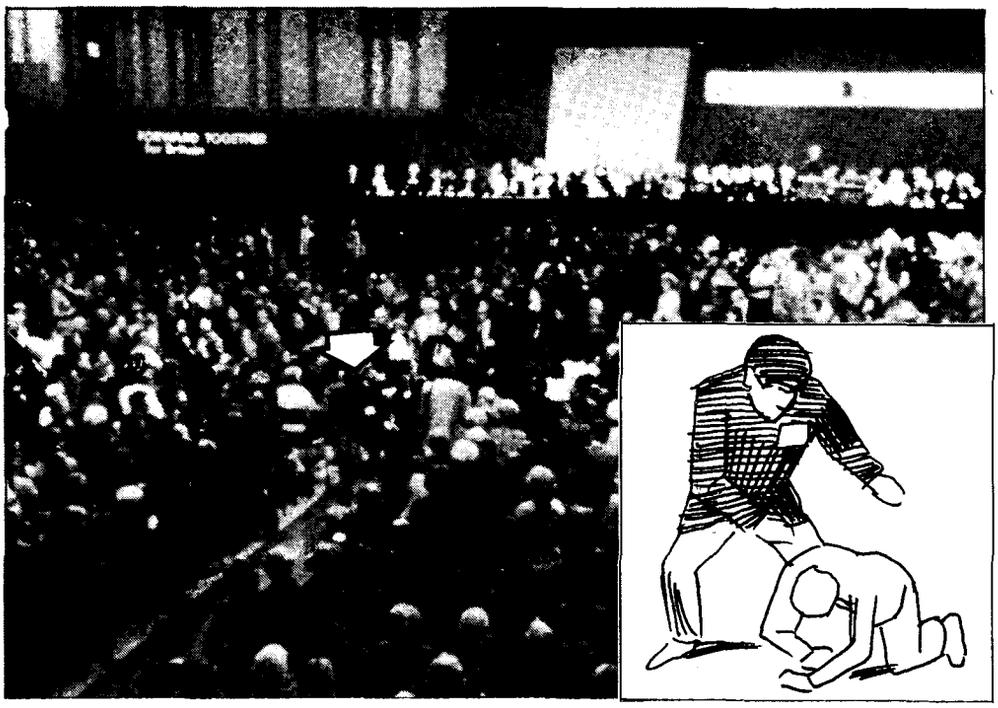

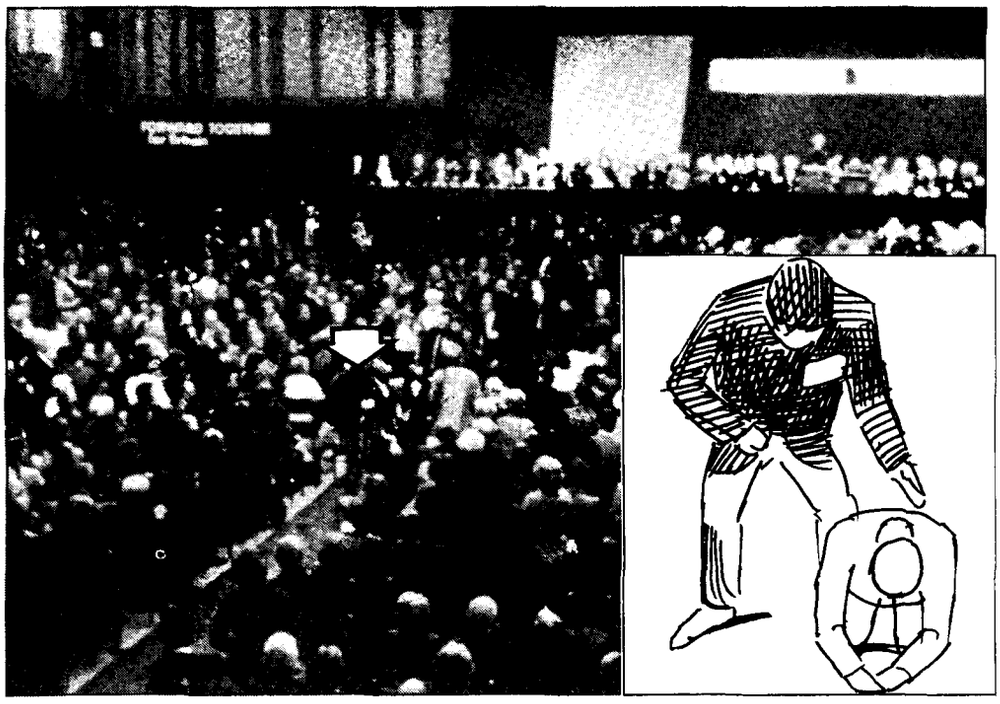

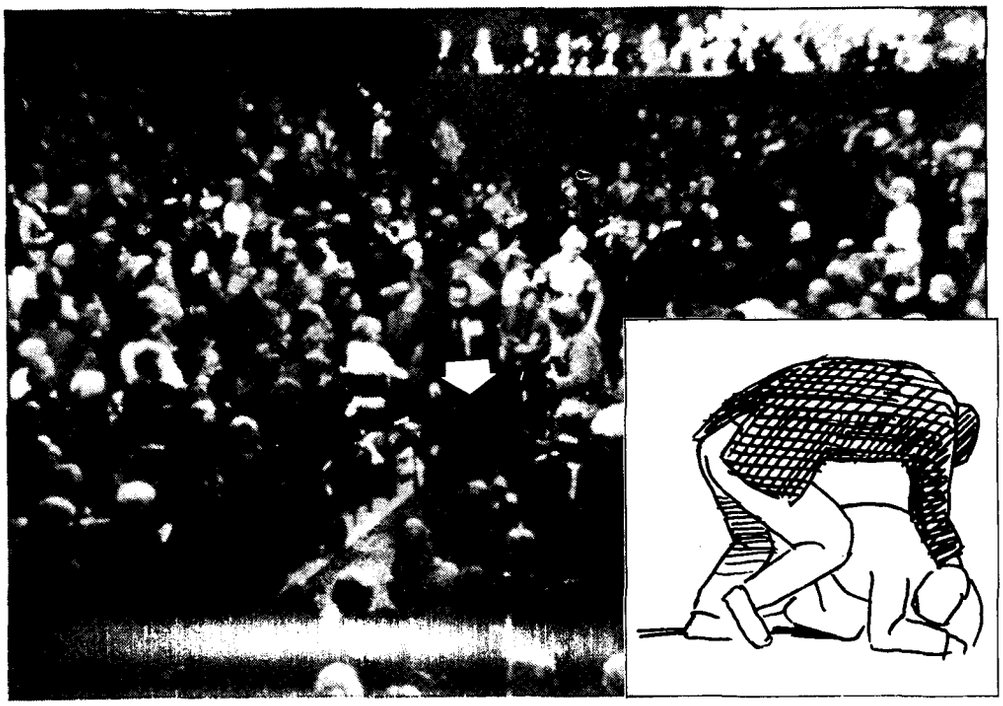

TORY PARTY CONFERENCE

New evidence on violence

SINCE OCTOBER the *New Statesman* has been investigating and reporting on a government cover-up.* At the Tory Party Conference, in full view of the Tory front bench, Michael Carver, a Right to Work demonstrator, was knocked unconscious. The government, in the form of Lord Belstead, at first denied that this had happened and then said that no investigation of this assault had taken place because no complaint had been received by the police. We have now received from Lord Bruce of Donnington — who has taken up this case — a film of the incident. This shows, when taken with the other evidence, that there is undoubtedly something to be investigated. The film has been handed to a national television company.

In the film, a large male member of the audience throws Carver — who had heckled Margaret Thatcher — to the ground. He hits Carver on the back of the neck or head with his left hand and then drops on to him. By the time the man is standing up Carver is clearly a dead weight in the hands of those trying to lift him. The incident is over in a few seconds and as Carver is carried from the hall the man returns to his seat.

There are formidable technical difficulties in reproducing stills from this film. First, there is inevitably a loss of definition by taking single frames from a film of any very fast movement. Second, the change from colour to black and white on newsprint reduced the quality. And third, in this case, the film is slightly underexposed as the camera had just moved from Margaret Thatcher on the well-lit stage.

For these reasons a piece of action which is clearly and unambiguously identifiable on the moving film needs some amplification in print. In our first three photographs the arrows point at the man, who is going through the moves just described and which are illustrated by the artist's drawings. The last three photographs show the man moving back to his seat.

Carver himself recalls:

> . . . a confusion of arms and my head approaching the floor. I recall saying something along the lines of 'there's no need to do that' i.e. knock me over . . .

The Times reported the event thus:

> one young man near me was being dragged from the hall unconscious after a pounding on the floor of the central aisle by security men in plain clothes and some Conservatives, including women.

Other correspondents agreed. The *Daily Telegraph:* 'he was felled by a blow from a security man'; the *Guardian:* 'quite limp . . . as if he were a shot deer'; the *Sunday Telegraph:* 'a side of beef'.

When Lord Bruce of Donnington raised the matter in the House of Lords, Lord Belstead at first said that Carver had been conscious when 'escorted from the hall.' Subsequently he had to change his story, but still refused to recognise the need for a police investigation. There is now no excuse for him holding this position. □

* See *NS* 31 October pg3; 21 November pg4; 19/26 December pg17

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John McVicar's sporting life

Underneath the stands with the cream

SUNDAY is the day after for professional footballers and for Rob Jenkins, West Ham's physiotherapist, it's naturally his busiest day. When I went to see him last Sunday, the team had drawn at Notts County the day before — a result which had given them a seven point lead in the league — and had a cup match against Wrexham the day after. (Although they lost this, putting them out of the FA Cup, they are still storming ahead inthe European Cup Winner's Cup and the League Cup — the club's so hot the ball boys are asking fees to give interviews.)

Football stadia force a certain pattern of architecture. Their centrepiece is necessarily the pitch around which must be banked stands. Underneath the stands is the only sensible place to put the players' facilities, given the need to be near the pitch, so places like dressing rooms can only be reached by walking along claustrophobic, mazelike, windowless corridors which give people like me the horrors. All the places I've ever been locked up in have had corridors like those under Upton Park.

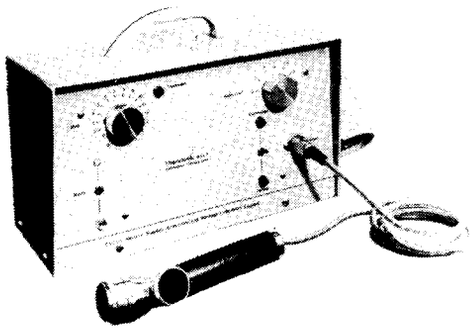
When I reached the Home Side's dressing room, Rob Jenkins had just come in from a run and was wheezing like a furred-up steam iron. 'I always have a run first when I come on in the morning,' he told me. 'It keeps you fit and lets me go to the pub lunch time with a clean conscience.' I noted with approval the half-empty bottle of scotch in his training bag. 'Come and meet Patsy Holland while I have a shower.'

He took me into the physio room, which leads off the dresssing room, where Patsy Holland was laid out on one of the three treatment couches reading the *Sunday Mirror*. Patsy got West Ham's only goal on Saturday but injured his knee in the process. I found I was among friends because after Rob had done the intros Patsy cracked that he came from nearby Poplar and knew the Kray twins' brother, Charlie: knowing a famous criminal is the East End equivalent of an old Etonian breaking the ice by claiming he knows a member of the cabinet.

Patsy explained how he'd pulled the medial ligaments in his right knee: 'I just got to the ball before the keeper and put it away but I got all tangled up with him. I didn't feel it at first but it went wobbly at half time and in the second half I had to come off. I reckon I'll be out a couple of weeks.' He added ruefully, 'That's how you know you're getting older — it takes longer to heal.'

THE NEXT PERSON to wander into the treatment room, wearing black underpants and a white T—shirt, was about ten years younger than the thirty-year-old Holland and so still had youth's fast-healing properties. Gary Nichols' jockey-like frame, overhanging, scar-tissued eyebrows mark him indelibly as the professional fighter that he is. Gary hopes to nick the British Bantamweight title soon. When Patsy asked him who the contenders for it were, he replied: 'What, you mean beside me?' It turned out that Gary had dropped a cooker on his knee and had come in for some of Rob's magic.

The talk turned to the relative earnings of fighters and footballers. Rob came in then from his shower, his unzipped tracksuit bottom flaping around unlaced Dunlop 'Green Flash' pumps. He said that most of the first team pay more tax than he earns. 'They're on five or six hundred a week with the perks to come.'



It helps keep 11 men on £25,000 a year

Patsy turned to Gary: 'What's it like in your game?' Gary replied: 'Not too clever for me now 'cause I'm still not main event. But you've only got to hit the right guy in the right place at the right time and you've got it made.'

It was about eleven now and a couple more first-team players drifted in wearing nothing below the waist. Alvin Martin and Frank Lampard both had groin injuries — a ubiquitous problem in football with all its leg stretching, twisting and turning, and physical contact. Rob started to speed up but not at the cost of the banter and good humour. The injured were being shuffled round the treatment couches, annoited with potions, put under mysterious lamps or being connected to Heath-Robinsonesque contraptions like he was running some space-age version of musical chairs. He got Patsy off the sonic machine and strapped his knee with a tension bandage. Gary went under the infra-red and the other two were attached to the ionisers.

I asked Rob how his craft rates with nature. 'Well it's all according to what the injury is but hopefully it speeds up the healing thricefold, fourfold? Basically what most forms of physical treatment do is speed up the repair mechanisms. All these machines are sort of physical catalysts; they increase the molecular agitation of the blood in an injury. That's a combined sonic machine — if I could only have one machine that's the one I'd have. Ultra sound in the treatment of sports injuries is the tops as far as I'm concerned.' Gary the fighter vouchsafed at this point that the present world lightweight champion, Jim Watt, has a portable sonic machine which he takes with him wherever he trains or fights.

Rob continued with his resumé of his craft: 'That's an ioniser — it's got a range of currents — direct, glavanic, interrupted galvanic and faradic current. That's a short-wave diathermic unit. After a few days I'll put that on Patsy's knee. It forms a heat field inside the injury speeding up the absorption of any creams I apply to the skin. And of course there are tablets which you can give that do it all chemically, but I use them as little as possible because of the side effects.'

I asked him about the long-term effects of football injuries. 'Hell, arthritis in the lower joints mainly. You could say that's an occupational hazard of playing football. But every physical activity's got its wear-and-tear effects. A cobbler will get problems with his shoulder later on in life; a boxer'll be a bit punchy.' The young fighter had already left. 'But that's living. You're gonna die anyway and if you end up with a bit of arthritis in your ankle that's a small price to pay for playing football for 20 years.'

ROB DELVED INTO a trainers bag for some cream to give to the now departing Patsy Holland and he picked up a brandy flask. 'That's for Bondy. He always has half a flask before a match. He mixes it with this (he fingered a small bottle labelled 'Dynamo — concentrated energy drink'), says it gives him energy. If he was to be breathalysed inthe tunnel going out he'd never pass. Mind you, I talk about Billy Bonds but when I'm on the line I'm always saying to myself that if I have another nip we'll score in a minute.' I found out later this was another of Rob's jokes: Bondy only drinks after the match.

Frank Lampard, who has been one of the forces in the stiffening of West Ham's traditionally soft defence, was the next to go. Rob explained why Frank couldn't play Saturday and won't be playing at Wrexham. 'Frank's got a groin injury which has gone to his back passage. The other day the surgeon had to have a probe about up there. Well, usually they put a finger stall on but Frank's got so much slack there he had to put a whole glove on. He looked like Al Johnson holding it up. Cor it must have hurt but you wouldn't have known it from Frank's face, no wonder he's fearless.'

About midday I started to make tracks, putting my tape and notebook away. Pat the tea girl came in shouting out, 'I hope no one's dressed.' Alvin was still stripped. She said to him, 'I think Frank looked disappointed because the surgeon wasn't here to have a probe.' Rob was still there ribbing everyone and everything when I left. The club's got a marvellous atmosphere, even the place where it most hurts — the treatment room. The humour is an integral part of the solidarity which is lifting West Ham at the moment. The one-time manager of West Ham and present England manager observed once that in football, other things being equal, skill rises to the top like cream. West Ham at the moment are playing the creamiest football in all the four leagues and if there is any justice, this time next season they'll be at the top of the first division. □

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Reagan

Contd from p.9

'frontierland' in stage coaches, through 'fantasyland' in Peter Pan galleons. In Washington this week one can see thousands of strange people in fancy dress riding through 'yesterdayland' — in huge limousines. 'Yesterdayland' a land of imperial certainties, where Iran was only Persia, where gas costs a few cents a gallon, where Vietnam was an unknown French colony, where unquestioned strategic superiority was like apple pie, where 'The Great Satan' was played by Dracula. 'Yesterdayland' where inflation was a stomach condition, where foreign natives were gratefully subdued by gunboats or marines, where the poor at home never bothered the Federal Government, where handsome cowboys did not pay for hostages but rescued them guns blazing, where Ronald Reagan was an average entertainer.

Now Ronald Reagan is king of yesterdayland. His new rich courtiers came to his coronation in corporate Lear jets from Texas and California, their men sleek in silk tuxedos, their women massaged in mink. Their symbols are bizarre: they include Sinatra ('We've been hearing these stories about Frank [and the mafia] for years' says Reagan. 'We just hope they aren't true'). Then there's Bob Hope whom television seemed at one stage to show in charge of the swearing in — but that was an illusion. Then there is the limousine. About 100 yards long, several tons of steel and sickmaking suspension, it purrs along at three miles to the gallon and protects its riders, as they cruise from one lavish party to another, from any sense of today.

Even Senator Barry Goldwater, a grand old trouper of yesterdayland, is somewhat appalled. 'It's costing $2,000 to hire one of those things for four days' he pointed out, 'when most Americans can't afford their food.'

Goldwater was quoted at one of those expensive parties which nowadays fill the pages of the *Washington Post* and even the *New York Times*. The *Times* on Monday carried long stories on the Republican hostesses who are emerging, rubbing their eyes as they gaze happily into the dawn of yesterday, from the social ghettoes into which the 'unstylish' Carters had condemned them. 'Style', or the lack thereof, is one of the great qualities of yesterdayland, and Nancy Reagan is said to have buckets of it. Whether this is because she favours 'off-the-shoulder evening gowns' and spent $25,000 on her inaugural trousseau, I cannot say. But this 'style' appears to be synonymous with ostentatious extravagance and that's something that the cowboy conservatives enjoy.

Reagan and his people have expressed many other beliefs which inspire the inhabitants of yesterdayland. They include the notions that pesky foreigners understand only the stick not the carrot, that 'human rights' means appeasement, that almost everything wrong in America is the fault of the federal government — this homily was repeated in the inaugural address, that if only the people are 'set free' then 'America will be great again.'

How long will the fantasies of 'yesterdayland' continue to inspire the 40th President? Hard to say, especially at the end of an extraordinarily emotional Inaugural day, when millions of people are happily celebrating the return of the hostages and hoping that it provides an omen for their own future. But it is going to be extraordinary to write about. Watch this space. □

Diary

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

■The Algerians have come very well out of the hostage affair, saving the good name of the Muslim world and proving that there is a real point to non-alignment. Will they ask in return that the Americans abandon their support for the Moroccan occupation of the Western Sahara? An American 'tilt' to Polisario could make up for many past mistakes.

■Reporting on Monday night's debate in the Cambridge Union stressed the egg which Keith Joseph copped on the back of the neck. I was more struck by the egg which he wore on his face. He was lucky enough to speak after Galbraith, who made a firework-free speech. But he did have to sit nodding and scribbling through a wonderfully scornful rebuttal from Lord Kaldor, who exposed the pathos and futility of monetarism while draped engagingly over the despatch box. With the able David Senior in the chair, a predominantly right-wing house was then treated to Professor Patrick Minford (recently rocketed to national fame by Peter Kellner). Minford is a real collector's item. He manages to look permanently as if a cigar has just exploded in his face. Arms waving, he told us that 'politics has nothing to do with it', and that 'unemployment is one of the major policies . . . aargh . . . *problems*'. The vote of no confidence duly went through, and I suppose it was because the enemies of the government's policy looked much more Establishment than the callow idealists facing them. For some reason this made me feel uncomfortable.

■The Western Right has invariably been able to field a strong team of apologists and fellow-travellers for dubious regimes. Yet somehow it is the bumbling leftie who always goes down in the annals. Eleanor Roosevelt is probably the most famous example, but there have been many others and the standard set by the TUC over Poland is unlikely to be surpassed in clumsiness for some years. Even the three clowns of Kabul don't quite match it. My private theory is that Labour people, being so much nicer, are often much more gullible. Take Bill Sirs of the steelworkers' union, a man who cannot possibly be as dense as he looks. He recently returned from one of those 'fact finding trips' to South Africa. Interviewed by the reliable Stanley Uys of the *Rand Daily Mail*, Sirs expressed his belief in 'peaceful and responsible change' and claimed to have discovered a new species:

> We met extremely good management who were looking for change and peaceful transition to bring all blacks into the field of traditional negotiations.

Not everything was up to scratch. In a recommendation of ineffable vacuity, Sirs proposes that Soweto:

> certainly should have a leisure and shopping centre of which it can be proud . . . . they should build the sort of leisure centres we have in Britain, with recreation facilities and a bright shopping complex.

Memo to Ian MacGregor: this man will believe anything.

■So Banker Jenkins thinks he can pull it off does he? He will have to curb his young followers, especially their tendency to false antithesis. Shirley Williams likes to ask, with the air of one laying a historic egg, whether people would choose democracy over socialism or socialism over democracy. Not to be outdone, David Owen appeared on the box at the weekend and, in a pseudo-Kennedy peroration, asked whether Labour supporters would put party before country or country before party. This all seems to me to be sanctimonious and dishonest. The socialist Left in this country has a better record on defending civil and democratic liberties than the Williamses and Owens have. And it was not the Left who signed secret treaties putting 'the national interest' in hock to Ronald Reagan's missile bases. What is it about the 'social democrats' that gives them their ghastly righteousness? As for Jenkins himself, I remember my friend and colleague Anthony Howard asking him whether, in his prolific writing of potted biographies and articles, he did his own typing. 'No' replied the great man, 'I find it hurts my fingers'.

■The vile attack on Bernadette and Michael McAliskey occluded another important story from Ulster last week, which was the conviction of two British soldiers for murder. It took over eight years for the criminals to be uncovered, because the regimental loyalty of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders enforced a tradition of *omerta* on all those who knew or suspected. The most interesting figure in the case is Captain Andrew Snowball, who as a second lieutenant was pretty sure that his men had pitchforked two innocent Catholic farmhands to death. ('Snowball', as I remember, was the most cynical beast on *Animal Farm*. So much for our new post-Nuremburg generation.) He decided that the reputation of the regiment came first. Reading of how he rationalised this to himself, I felt a comparison tugging at my mind. It was only when hearing of the essential rightness of the bombing of Cambodia, and the virtues of loyalty to the President, that I clicked. The menta-

Roger Woddis

Teacher knows best

'Corporal punishment is most effective as part of a positive and caring relationship between teacher and pupil, as between parent and child.' — the Assistant Masters Association.

The punishment that children bear
In institutes of learning
Reflects their teachers' loving care
For strokes that soil their underwear
And keep the home fires burning.

Such practices are elsewhere banned,
But those are backward nations;
Assistant masters understand
There's nothing like a bleeding hand
For forging warm relations.

Though Captain Bligh, while all at sea,
Found what a harboured grudge meant,
The law of licensed tyranny
Demands that teachers should be free
To exercise their judgment.

Our caring floggers have a case,
Nor can their case be faulted:
They understand the modern child,
Who daily yearns to be defiled
And loves to be assaulted.

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lity of Captain Andrew Snowball is the mentality of General Alexander Haig.

■It's quite absurd to say that the Namibia talks 'collapsed'. They were sabotaged by South Africa, with a conscious and deliberate policy of avoiding elections and the inevitable triumph of SWAPO. The South Africans know that the Western convenors of the conference will not impose any sanctions, and they hope for time to build up a local Babrak Karmal in the shape of Dirk Mudge and his 'Democratic Turnhalle Alliance'. (Turnhalle', as I never tire of pointing out, means 'drill-hall', which is perfect.) In this wretched task, they have engaged the services of 'Sir' Trevor Lloyd-Hughes, for many years press secretary to Harold Wilson. His PR firm has taken the account, and he has sent this office a signed letter referring to SWAPO as 'terrorists'. In common with all of Wilson's old gang, Lloyd-Hughes will be kept under scrutiny by the Alliance of the Democratic Turnstile.

■There seems to be general unanimity about Vanessa Redgrave's role in *Playing for Time*. Even those spuriously even-handed critics (who contrived to get in a blow at the PLO while impartially denouncing the Nazis) agreed that her political views did not *necessarily* disqualify her as an actress. All this is good, and long overdue. I still have a question to raise. Vanessa Redgrave and her Workers Revolutionary Party are in fact much closer to Colonel Ghaddaffi than they are to the Palestinians. In *Le Monde* of 11-12 January there appeared a call from Ghaddaffi to reconsider the historical guilt of Hitler. 'It is the Allies who have turned Nazism into a bad thing and have portrayed it as such', he told his listeners in Tripoli. Apparently 'received ideas' were clouding perceptions and had been imposed on history by the victors. Not long ago I quoted the WRP favourably in their attack on the anti-semites who cloak themselves in pseudo-Arabism. If they want to explain their position *vis a vis* Libya, our columns are open to them.

■Congratulations to *Tribune*, which keeps alive the finest traditions of internationalism. It cartooned Greece's entry into the Common Market by depicting a Trojan Horse, with one man peering in and reporting that it seemed to be full of olive oil. Not all the Left is as boorish and philistine about Greece. Merlin Press have just brought out, for £12.50, the memoirs of General Stefanos Sarafis. He was the commander of ELAS, the Greek resistance army during the war. After the Germans left, he had to fight the British. We'll review the book later on, but it prompts a reminiscence. A visitor to the *NS*, a former British officer, told us that on Christman Eve 1944 his battery was ordered to drop a salvo into an ELAS position. Everyone was a bit tight, but our friend had the presence of mind to check the map reference in view of the proximity of Athens. He decided to aim a touch higher than he had been ordered, so that the shells would clear some intervening high ground. In the morning he discovered that he had just missed demolishing the Acropolis.

This England

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☐ In these days when home industries are starting up for everything, wives might find recapturing the art of starching an amusing diversion. — *The Times* (Caroline Zvegintzov)

Wild rose

Arthur Marshall

I HAVE TAKEN the liberty once before and on behalf of all of us of expressing the country's thanks to those who, in our daily newspapers, remind us of this or that stimulating anniversary. The Appleton newspapers arrive on the early bus from Exeter (snow, trains and, of course, printers permitting) and are then collected, sorted and delivered to our doors by the delightful Mary, a much revered and tireless grandmother (a push-carted grandchild, gurgling with excitement, often shares her paper round) and who, and what a fine example to many of her juniors, then presses on with her other task as road-sweeper and general tidy-upper, a cigarette and a muted transistor usually enlivening the latter activity. She pays not the slightest attention to the heaviest downpours of rain and worse and during the appalling winter conditions of two years ago, the papers were, when they finally reached Appleton, delivered on the dot. I rather doubt whether she belongs to the Paper Deliverers and Road-Sweepers' Union, if such there be, and indeed her serene and contented expression throughout her work leads one to think that she is operating without benefit of union.

And thus it is that overnight guests at 'Myrtlebank', seated at the breakfast-table and sipping their orange juice prior to the bacon and eggs (when I am lucky enough to have American visitors, I usually find them at first astonished and then delighted by the presence of fried bread, a culinary concept generally quite unknown to them), can open one or other of the two daily papers in which we indulge and get abreast of the news, so often something unsettling about either France or fish or motor-cars. However, with the toast and marmalade (Tiptree, when not a delicious pot of home-made) they can cheer themselves with a peep at 'Today's Anniversary'. What could possibly be jollier than the discovery that on this very day, albeit a few years ago, the Venerable Bede, a prime favourite with every anniversarian, was born, or that Rasputin was, hooray, hooray, murdered or that Grace Darling had her tonsils out. I see the compilers of these pleasing factual reminders as donnish figures living in happy retirement in, perhaps, Midhurst, in a dusty cloud of reference books and making sure that the great figures of the past — Robespierre, Madame Curie, and Whymper (first up the Matterhorn, which is worthier of recall than being, Ooops!, first down the Matterhorn) — each gets their little moment of prominence.

Hitherto such compilers have, as far as I know, preferred to remain anonymous and to hide their light, and it is indeed a glorious effulgence, under bushels and so it was with some surprise that I noted a few weeks ago that the credit for a very lively and interesting list of anniversaries in the *Times* (and please don't let it die) was proudly claimed, and rightly, by Jack Lonsdale. Here was richness, with a few dear old favourites parading, as tradition demands, before us — St Francis (of, where else, Assisi), George Stephenson, Kemal Ataturk, an assassinated Tsar (buzz, buzz) and Wat Tyler — but interspersed with fresher names and events — Savoy Theatre opened, Ernest Bevin born, discovery of Uranus in 1781, birth of Ethel M. Dell, and the death in 1581 of what must now surely be regarded as a rather obscure Bishop of Ely. Mr Lonsdale is clearly a nice, cheerful person who goes in much more for births than for deaths and, running down the list, one's eye suddenly lights on a well-loved name and the heart lifts immediately up for in August, 1881, Dame Rose Macaulay was born.

When the *NS* decides to go a real bust, it goes, I must say, a real bust and the last time that I saw dear Dame Rose (I had known her for some time and was allowed to drop the Dame) was at a *NS* party given for contributors and friends and in, of all places, Londonderry House in Park Lane. I suppose that this must have been some time in the 50s and lavishness hardly describes the outpourings of champagne and other drinks, the toothsome canapés (I distinctly spotted caviare) and the elaborate flower arrangements. I saw no sign of guilt on any of the faces present, no hint that they felt that we ought properly to be drinking beer and eating corned beef sandwiches and discussing existentialism in a run-down town hall somewhere south of the Thames. Best bibs and tuckers were everywhere to be seen except, of course, on dear Rose. Though always fresh as a daisy, she was by no means what is sometimes called a dressy person and she often looked, in Dorothy Parker's vivid phrase, as though she was on her way out of a burning building and had snatched up the first garments that came to hand. We had a happy chat for she liked to laugh and, gazing about us, there was much to please that splendidly witty and uniquely gifted lady.

I did not like to ask her if she had come by car for she would certainly have offered, in her kind way, to run me home and I had had already, a dozen or so years before, the traumatic experience of being her passenger. It was in London and during the war and the Blitz and the black-out and when few, luckily, were awheel. We had been fellow guests at dinner with a charming hostess in Percy Street just off the Tottenham Court Road and my destination was, on that occasion, Pall Mall and the Reform Club, no great distance. Emerging from dinner and into the pitch-black night, we climbed into what must have been something like a Baby Austin, Rose settled herself confidently at the wheel and we were off. I forget now exactly when I realised for the first time that we were progressing not upon the road but upon the pavement. There had certainly been a bump and a lurch, after which the lamp-posts, looming up in the very feeble light that was all that was allowed from the slotted head-lamps, were appearing on the right hand side of the car rather than on the left. Meanwhile Rose chattered away amiably about the extraordinary difficulty of buying onions in wartime London and what an added excitement, and a much needed one, they would impart to Woolton Pie. I would not have upset or wounded her for the world and it was fortunate that the darkness in the car concealed the fact that my eyes were from then on tight shut throughout further lurches and bumps, for I am not stout-hearted enough to wish to see death approaching but would prefer it to come, as come it will, as a complete surprise. But she got me there in the end, and I was full of gratitude for her kindness and the lift. I was grateful to her too for life itself. ☐

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LETTERS

The thin blue line

From Ole Hansen, Co-director, The Legal Action Group

Despite clear evidence to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure that the police regularly and unlawfully exceed their powers, the Commission failed to come up with adequate sanctions against police illegality and recommended giving the police new legal powers which, if enacted, would be another significant step towards policing by coercion rather than by consent. If Walter Merricks (*NS* 9 January) grasped this, possibly unpalatable, fact about the report which he signed and so assiduously defends, he might feel a little less hurt and perplexed.

True, the Commission suggests various novel safeguards against the police breaking the rules. However, in the main, these consist simply in better record keeping and what is to happen if, for any reason good or bad, the safeguards are broken? The Commission's answer is that the wronged individual should take civil proceedings in the court or that it would be dealt with as a matter of internal police discipline. As to the first, the Commission (para 4.122) does not take issue with those who gave evidence that civil proceedings were ineffective as a means of control and, as far as police disciplinary procedures are concerned, it recognised (para 4.119) that they must be improved — but makes no proposals to do so.

Thus, the Commission's safeguards will, when it really matters, prove to be ineffective. There will be little to dissuade the police officer from breaking the rules in respect of detention for questioning and interrogation. If a confession is obtained as a result it will still be admissible in court. The Commission rejected on spurious and ill-considered grounds the most effective method so far devised for trying to ensure legality in the investigative process: a rule whereby evidence illegally obtained may not be used in court. This 'exclusionary rule' has been the law in the US for the past 20 years.

There is a serious need for the existing confusing variety of police powers to be put on a statutory basis, but the Commission goes further than this. It is, of course, true that the proposals of stop and search in the street, road blocks and search and seizure of evidence in the possession of innocent individuals and organisations goes no further than the present police practice. That, however, is hardly the point — the proposals go much further than the present law, and if the police have, as they admitted and the Commission clearly accepted, been exceeding their present powers, why should we, at least in the absence of an exclusionary rule, trust them not to exceed any extended powers they may be given in the future?

28A Highgate Road, London NW5

Artful Miss Austen

From Mrs Miriam MacIver

It is sad that Eva Figes should have joined the long line of critics who have been unfair to Jane Austen over the Napoleonic Wars. 'Although Jane Austen, master of artful feminine myopia, never mentioned the Napoleonic Wars directly . . .' (*NS* 9 January)

Consider what Jane Austen actually wrote. Mr Palmer is comparing his old home with his new one, to which he hopes to attract seaside visitors:

> You will not think I have made a bad exchange when we reach Trafalgar House — which by the by, I almost wish I had not named Trafalgar — for Waterloo is more the thing now. However, Waterloo is in reserve; and if we have encouragement enough this year for a little crescent to be ventured on (as I trust we shall) then we shall be able to call it Waterloo Crescent . . . *Sanditon* (1817)

Artful certainly. Feminine myopia? I think not.

Oakhill, 126 Highfield Lane, Southampton

So that's all right then

From Christoph Bertram, Director, International Institute for Strategic Studies

I refer to your column 'The Bullshit Machine' (*NS* 9 January) in which you take this Institute to task for inexactitudes. You invite readers to suggest examples for future episodes, and I would like to propose the *New Statesman*.

First of all, if you had followed the Institute's work over the last two decades, you will have noticed that this has not been a source for scaremongering. The same applies for the 1980/81 edition of the *Military Balance*, a copy of which was sent to you on publication, together with the text of the press release. The scare stories were not our own, nor did they emanate from us. They were exclusively the invention of the media, in particular of the Associated Press wire service.

Second, while you criticize us, you seem to accept uncritically the claims made by the Washington-based Center for Defense Information. Having had a chance to examine these claims, we can only state categorically that they are unsubstantiable. The compilation of military data is a serious and responsible task, as well as a difficult one. The critique we have received is, on the whole, not serious and not responsible.

Third, you criticize us for having made corrections in our data, once we realized that three corrections were necessary. Would you rather have wanted us to consciously misinform by refusing to scrutinize our data?

23 Tavistock Street, London WC2

Rentokil's risks

From J David, Chairman, British Wood Preserving Association

I write in reference to the article on Pentachlorophenol appearing in your issue of 9 January ('Revealed: Rentokil's hidden risks'). How risks which have been aired in publications as diverse as the *Daily Mirror* and *Nature* in the last 12 months can be called 'hidden' passes my understanding, however let us try again.

Pentachlorophenol, like all biologically active chemicals used in industry, is under constant review by governments around the world who are interested in protecting public health and scarce resources without endangering their population. Their decisions are normally based on scientific evidence, occasionally on political expediency. The UK government, which is concerned with scientific facts, has reviewed, and continues to review, all evidence of toxicity, cancer risks, flammability, corrosiveness and any other factor which might affect the health or comfort of workers, the public and the environment. You simply asked the wrong department. Try either the Health and Safety Executive or the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. In this particular context they run the Pesticides Safety Precautions Scheme which looks at all the evidence of risk and lays down whether and how certain potentially hazardous chemicals may be used safely. The members of the British Wood Preserving Association have supported and continue to support that Scheme in addiion to obeying the labelling and other regulations laid down by Brussels.

As for the particular revelation that appears to have sparked off your article, carcinogenicity of hexachlordioxin has been reported at levels which mean that only by taking several immediately fatal doses of pentachlorophenol could you run the risk of cancer in the long term.

Premier House, 150 Southampton Row, London WC1

Codes of conduct

From N Ratcliffe

I was very moved, and impressed, by Peter Kellner's piece (*NS* 16 January) on the journalistic atrocities perpetrated by some of his union comrades upon some of those who loved, and were loved by, Tom Litterick. (I, myself, was not one of his admirers.) However, what troubles me — and must puzzle many people — is that all the long catalogue of tastelessnes exhibited over the years by some journalists must have developed either because the individual journalists are made that way, or out of fear of losing their jobs if they don't go out and get the dirt.

Peter Kellner quotes from the NUJ code. Codes, as appellants to housebuilders and motor-traders associations well know, can be pretty useless. What really counts is the action taken, and sanctions imposed, on those members who thumb their noses at the Code.

Now I am fully aware of the horror felt by 'progressive' minds, and periodicals, at the thought of appearing to be a 'goody-goody' but I'm sure many of your readers would be reassured to learn — sadly, it would be reported in few papers other than the *NS* — that the worst offenders, after that 'important test case for the NUJ', have been severely reprimanded.

Pendeen, 5 Cavendish Avenue, Buxton, Derbys.

What went wrong at The Times

From Innis Macbeath

Let me try to appease Jake Ecclestone (Letters 9 January). I shouldn't have called his return from the news desk to the reporters' room 'demotion' in my article (*NS* 19/26 December). I was accepting the subjective language of colleagues; a lot of them thought it did him credit.

I don't think that concentration on trade union activities is wrong — how could I? — just different from his predecessors, and I didn't say he had specialised in trade union work all his life. The pressures on employees' representatives either to drop out (like me) or go virtually full-time (like him) are seldom fully recognised. I was frustrated and resigned; he was frustrated and exploded out of inaction.

If Jake re-reads the article, he will not find the word 'blame' in it. I was trying to explain a course of events that a lot of people I meet find fantastic or beyond reason, and to draw a few conclusions from the explanation. If I were to consider 'blame' about the staged settlement business, I would not put it on him. So it occurred to someone before the walk-out; it was not in time to avert it.

As for pompous assumptions, Jake has probably forgotten that when I stood down as father in January 1973, I said it was because I felt that I no longer had the full support of the chapel. I can't see how anyone could read the article and think that I assumed that my 'policies' continued. In choosing a phrase to describe them, I hope Jake isn't suggesting that I was anything worse than inordinately patient, like himself at the time.

11 Broadhurst, Ashtead, Surrey

Spook Erection and gypsies

From Cllr Michael Meadowcroft, Leader, Liberal Group, Leeds City Council

Councillor E.H. Morris's letter (*NS* 9 January) on Spook Erection and gypsies is, I am afraid, typical of the Leeds City Council Labour Group's entirely negative attitude to gypsies. Councillor Morris's letter may persuade us that the Council doing its own evictions is somewhat less vicious than employing a private company but he gives no indication of any constructive or sympathetic policies to enable those who legitimately seek to live an itinerant life to do so without intolerable interference with the rest of us who choose to live in permanent dwellings.

There is no doubt that the aggressive and anti-social behaviour often shown by itinerants occupying unsuitable sites is a grave affront to those immediately affected, but their inevitable insecurity and embattled conditions, coupled with an almost total lack of legal sites with proper sanitary and scrap collection facilities, encourages violence and alienation. Equally, their predilection for avoidance of the law's financial requirements is actually facilitated by the lack of properly regulated legal sites.

At the moment Leeds has one official site — established by a Conservative administration — on the edge of the city, and it needs two further sites: one for those wishing to stay of a matter of weeks and another for those wishing to come and go within days. Until there is better legal provision we are bound to have the highly expensive and unpleasant problem of regularly hounding itinerants from a score of unsuitable sites.

The brutal fact is that there are no votes in gypsies, who are without doubt the easiest group to discriminate against and probably the least attractive to support. That, however, should in no way excuse any political party that reckons to be progressive from a lack of sensible and humane provision for a minority.

Civic Hall, Leeds

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Barbara Taylor argues that modern feminists should heed the lessons of Victorian sexual controversies

Female vice and feminist virtue

MODERN WESTERN society likes to know its good girls from its bad girls. It likes to be able to distinguish the virtuous from the vicious, the pure from the impure, the normal from the perverse. These distinctions, which are usually represented as universal and immutable, are in fact constructed over time, as certain types of 'illicit' sexual behaviour become identified with specific social roles. Thus the woman who has sex with other women becomes a lesbian; the woman who has sex with many men becomes a nymphomaniac; the woman who has sex for a price is a prostitute. The exchange of sexual services for economic gain has always been part of female survival strategy, but it was not until the late 19th century that the role of the prostitute became clearly demarcated, and her status as a sexual deviant established. This transition did not occur in some hidden underworld, but on the centre-stage of Victorian political life, in the midst of intense public debate and feminist militancy. The story of how it occurred has now been told in Judith Walkowitz's excellent *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, a book which manages not only to cast new light on old sexual controversies but also to raise some disturbing questions for sexual politicians today.

The narrative backbone of the book is the tale of the struggle for repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. Between 1864 and 1869 Parliament passed a series of Acts intended to check the spread of venereal disease (then at almost epidemic level) among the military. Under the terms of this legislation, any woman residing in a regulated town could be named by the police as a 'common prostitute', registered, and required to undergo regular medical inspections. If found to be suffering from VD, she would then be incarcerated in a hospital until cured. Any suggestion that soldiers and sailors should be similarly inspected was rejected on the grounds that this would humiliate the men and dampen their fighting spirit. Thus the Acts, while proving medically ineffective, managed to install the double sexual standard as a central tenet of state policy, thereby sparking off Britain's first mass feminist mobilisation.

By the mid-1870s thousands of outraged women had joined male civil libertarians in a national repeal campaign whose feminist wing, under the charismatic leadership of Josephine Butler, soon developed the militant rhetoric and popular tactics which were later to be employed in the suffrage battle. For more than a decade (until repeal was finally won in 1886) respectable Britons watched, horrified, as middle-class ladies mounted platforms all over the country to denounce the Acts as a 'sacrifice of female liberties' and to urge their 'fallen sisters' to resist them. As the campaign gathered momentum it became the target of a ferocious counter-attack: prostitutes who resisted examination were dragged through the courts and vilified, while their feminist supporters were subjected to increasingly hysterical verbal and physical abuse (Butler herself was frequently assaulted by gangs of men who, on one occasion, smeared her with excrement and tore her clothing, shouting that 'they must and would have women'). For their own part, the feminists responded with a flood of lurid propaganda in which the Acts' supporters were characterised as a lascivious crew of 'upper-class profligates' and 'terrible aristocratic doctors' whose 'medical lust of handling and dominating women' was satisfied by the use of the 'steel penis' (the speculum) in the 'instrumental rape' of the internal examination. Sexual antagonism was open and bitter. 'It is men, only men, from the first to the last that we have to do with!', as one prostitute exclaimed to Butler:

> To please a man I did wrong at first, then I was flung about from man to man. Men police laid hands on us. By men we are examined, handled, doctored, and messed on with. In hospital it is a man again who makes prayers and reads the Bible for us. We are up before magistrates who are men, and we never get out of the hands of men.

In one town after another feminist repealers and prostitutes joined forces to try and break this circuit of masculine authority. In many areas they were joined by radical working men, who viewed the Acts as an upper-class assault on 'their' women. But even as this resistance grew, the effects of the Acts were making themselves felt — not, as Walkowitz emphasises, in any decline in the incidence of VD, but in the changing character of prostitution and the political response to it.

For women on the game, the Acts accelerated the transformation of prostitution from a casual employment into a criminal profession. Walkowitz's account of how this occurred — how poor women for whom commercial sex had once been a transitional stage in their working lives found themselves yanked into the unwelcome limelight of state registration and surveillance from which they found it almost impossible to escape — is the most impressive (and poignant) section of her book. Thus stigmatised and criminalised, prostitutes were pushed to the margins of their communities, shunned by neighbours who had formerly accepted them. 'It's no use trying to reform now,' one girl told a repealer, for she was 'registered as a prostitute and everyone would know what she had done and what she was . . .'

BUT THIS construction of the prostitute as a social outcast had important implications not only for herself and the working-class community in which she moved (where it signalled a new level of state intervention in plebeian life), but for the sexual status of women in general. The real sin/crime of the prostitute was not that she serviced men for money (plenty of respectable women did that in loveless 'mercenary marriages', as one repealer tartly pointed out), but that she was a woman whose social identity was defined wholly by her active sexual practice, in a world where the virtuous woman was always sexually passive. Her 'vice' was her sexuality. In earlier centuries it had been assumed that all women shared this vice, that the female sex was lascivious by nature; but by the Victorian age this had changed. The eternal Eve, once presumed to be slumbering in the bosom of every woman, awaiting only the tickle of a serpent's tail to leap into action, now became confined to a single 'deviant' sub-species of the sex. Thus the sharpening of the line between vicious and virtuous womanhood, which occurred through the implementation of the Acts, served not only to trap prostitutes within an outcast status but to consolidate an ideology of feminine passionlessness which crippled the lives of all women, good and bad alike.

Walkowitz does not spell out this aspect of the prostitution debate as clearly as she might have done; yet she documents its results with devastating clarity. For so powerful was this ideology of asexual womanhood that even feminists rarely challenged it. As far as Butler and her sisters were concerned, voluntary extra-marital sex *was* vice, and the only way they

Mary Evans Picture Library

'We never get out of the hands of men': a Victorian prostitute appears before the magistrate

Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State by JUDITH R. WALKOWITZ *Cambridge* £15

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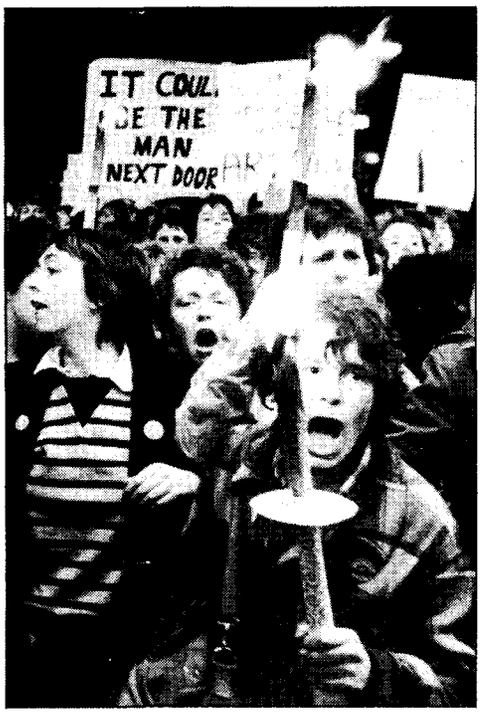
could defend prostitutes against the charge of viciousness was by arguing that no woman entered prostitution voluntarily. Within all the repeal literature the prostitute was portrayed as the 'hapless victim' of male lust, forced into submission by dire economic necessity and masculine coercion. When feminist repealers met prostitutes who did not conform to this image — who were clearly unrepentant about their career and unwilling to exchange it for lower-paid respectable trades like domestic service or needlework — they were shocked and repelled. 'They looked cold and hard,' Butler said of one such group of Plymouth women; they had 'no modesty' left in them.

And it was this strand within Victorian feminism — its adherence to standards of female 'modesty' which implicitly placed all heterosexual women in a position of sexual victimisation — which ultimately rendered it susceptible to a brand of moral puritanism which was overtly repressive in its rhetoric and aims. In the years after the suspension of the Con-



Morning Star

'The man next door': 1980 anti-Ripper march

tagious Diseases Acts many repeal advocates became involved in the Social Purity movement, whose goals included raising the age of female consent to 21, suppressing all extra-marital sex (including prostitution and general working-class 'immorality'), and imposing on men of all classes the same rigid standards of chastity and decency that they demanded of themselves. The struggle against sexual exploitation became a struggle against all deviant (i.e. non-marital, non-reproductive) sexual self-expression. The battle against the double standard became a crusade against 'carnality' itself. By no means all feminist repealers joined in this wave of sexual reaction (Butler herself strongly opposed it), but very many did, and Walkowitz leaves us in no doubt about her verdict on this development. Within Social Purity, she concludes, 'moral concerns' became disconnected from 'larger feminist issues', and the 'feminist content of the repeal movement' was subverted.

Yet if my reading of Walkowitz's evidence is correct, it was precisely the underlying ambivalence within feminist sexual strategy itself which allowed Social Purity to arise. And that, in the context of contemporary sexual politics, is a thought worth pausing over. Today, a century after the C.D. Acts, a group of New York feminists is busy trying to shut down the red-light districts of the city — a campaign for which they have been condemned by prostitutes' organisations. Today all across Britain feminists are beginning to demand the closure of porn shops, the suppression of films and advertisements depicting women as targets of male sexual violence, the intensification of police action against rapists, wife-beaters, etc. The language of 'male lust' and female victimisation once again echoes through feminist meeting-halls, just as it did in the days when Josephine Butler stood on platforms brandishing a speculum and describing how it 'violated and humiliated' women whose only crime was to be the object of brute male instincts. Let no-one doubt how deep women's anger against this degradation was then, or how fierce it is now. Sexuality has always been the most savage arena of male/female hostilities, and will remain so as long as the desires which draw men and women toward one another are lived within a nexus of masculine power, twisted in a vice of male dominance and female subordination.

AS WE move back on to this old, old territory of gender warfare, Walkowitz's book serves as a timely reminder of just how treacherous a territory it is. Women's struggle — the struggle to live our sexual lives freely, without humiliation or violation — must be fought, particularly in times like the present when sexual violence is felt to be increasing and when the media seem determined to make rape and wife-battering appear acceptable male pastimes. Feminists will not evade this battle, or fail to respond to the female rage which is making itself felt in attacks on sex cinemas, in reclaim-the-night marches, and in demonstrations in areas terrorised by male 'Rippers' acting out the ultimate fantasies of a violent male sexual culture. But as this anger builds towards a new peak of militancy, it is important for us to recognise that now, as in the 1880s, it carries within it painful and complex contradictions. There are still many women today for whom commercial sex is their only source of livelihood: as feminists, what is our attitude towards the issues they have raised? There are also many Mary Whitehouses, our contemporary Social Purity advocates, who would be only too glad to see feminists agitating against 'male vice' if that meant the suppression of open eroticism and the repression of prostitution: do we want such people as our allies?

The question may seem absurd, given the gulf which divides feminists from puritans like Whitehouse on issues such as abortion, yet it deserves to be raised. For in struggling against the terrible weight of present-day sexual oppression it is all too easy to forget that the power, fear and anxiety which currently deform relations between the sexes can and eventually will be eliminated, and in their stead will emerge a new style of heterosexual relation — one based not on dominance and submission but on joyful egalitarian eroticism. If we forget this possibility, if we view ourselves as the permanent victims of male sexual coercion, then, like many of the feminist repealers of the 1880s, we too will turn toward a politics of repression. How to avoid this — how to construct a sexual strategy which encompasses not only present oppression but future liberation — is the dilemma which faces all of us. Reading Walkowitz's book made me acutely aware of the centrality of that problem to earlier feminist struggles and its urgency for us today. □

Post-War British Theatre Criticism

JOHN ELSOM

With drawings by Feliks Topolski

John Elsom sets out the critical reaction to some fifty key post-war productions of the British theatre, as gauged primarily through the contemporary reviews of theatre critics. Aiming not simply to select the 'best' of theatre criticism, he allows the reader to be the critic of the critics, revealing in this selection the widespread changes in response to plays and productions. The plays chosen include Pinter's *The Homecoming*, Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* and Edward Bond's *Saved*.

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The National Front

NIGEL FIELDING

This exploration of the NF ideology is based on a participation-observation study which involved the development of relations with headquarters, and with members in several English cities. Candidates, activists, ordinary members and opponents of the NF were interviewed. Nigel Fielding describes in detail the ethnography of the NF, and he investigates the party ideology, concentrating on the key aspects of race, nationalism and conspiracy theory. *International Library of Sociology.*

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J. P. Stern on modern Germany's debt to its philosophers

Keeping evil in check

The Tragedy of Enlightenment by PAUL CONNERTON *Cambridge* £10.50 & £3.50.

This book, written in a style of exemplary succinctness and clarity, performs a considerable service for its English-speaking readers. It describes, analyses and subjects to searching criticism the work of Max Horkheimer, director of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research from 1930 to his death in 1973; Theodor W. Adorno, social philosopher, aphorist and musicologist, his closest associate; Herbert Marcuse, father figure of the students' revolt of 1968, whose connection with the School was intermittent; and Jürgen Habermas, the leading German sociologist who has partly modified and continued the School's theories into the present day. The first three, members of the generation of the troubled Thirties, emigrated to the United States before 1939. Their views were formed, first by the impact of the National Socialist revolution of 1933 (regrettably, Dr Connerton follows current fashion in speaking of 'fascism' and calling the revolution 'aborted'), then by their experience of American technological society at war and under the impact of McCarthyism.

When these men returned to Germany in the early Fifties, the research centre they re-established in Frankfurt was just about the only secular institution which could claim a continuity unblemished by compromises with the Hitler régime: how fairly they wielded the power derived from this claim Dr Connerton does not say. Indeed, he is very austere with his readers. There are no anecdotes about the way Horkheimer's great wealth exerted its pressure on his collaborators; about Adorno's dictatorial attitude, first to hapless Walter Benjamin (whose work is briefly mentioned but not discussed), then to Habermas; or about Marcuse's Washington connections. Connerton's concern is, quite properly, with their published ideas.

Generalising from their experience as *German* intellectuals and social scientists, these men set out to continue and revise Marx's political critique of liberal capitalism. In a situation where class antagonisms such as Marx had identified appeared to be eroded, and the precipitous growth of industrial production had changed the ideology of early capitalism along lines not foreseen by him, they proposed to redirect the work of enlightenment by different means and toward new goals. The causes of the change they saw in the temporary but nevertheless decisive victory of the totalitarian régime in Germany, in the corruption of the revolutionary socialist doctrine in Stalin's Russia, and in the ever-increasing domination of technology and its 'apparatus' in the Western world. Being German thinkers, they must needs conflate these phenomena into a single historical scheme. Accordingly, where the philosophers o the 18th-century Enlightenment replaced God by Humanity in the judgment seat of History, they in turn (with Auschwitz and Hiroshima in mind) replace Man by absolute, insurmountable evil. (Like Kafka, they seem to find pleasure in its insurmountability.) To the trivialisation of the past they oppose its demonisation. Critics (other than Connerton) have seen this move as part of some Jewish theological heritage. This view seems to me untenable. The lives these men led were as secular as the world in which they lived — what brought back the 'demons' into social life and politics was neither 'fascism' nor 'theology', but the ideology of the German Thirties.

What connects the writings of the Frankfurt School with Marx (and through him with Hegel's philosophy of history) is the emphasis they place on the determination of social action by a force not grounded in the conscious decisions of men. In Hegel this force, called 'the cunning of Reason', leads men to results other than those intended by them, thus furthering the progress of 'Spirit' on its way through History. In what Dr Connerton calls Marx's 'scientism' it is the relationship between a society's 'material substructure' and its social, political and cultural arrangements which assumes the form of an unalterable natural fact and leads to results which are thought of as inaccessible to decisive rational intervention. Similarly, in Horkheimer's and Adorno's theories it is the impetus of modern technology which becomes autonomous, self-perpetuating, moved by a dynamic all its own.

This force Habermas offers to check by setting up a fundamental distinction between 'instrumental reason' and 'communication', claiming that insight into this distinction makes possible control over the apparently inexorable march of electronics and ever new gadgetry. By 'communication' he means discourse that seeks understanding and assent rather than domination. Under the notion of 'instrumental reason'. on the other hand, he wishes to comprise two apparently related but not really comparable functions: its proper field of operation is the natural sciences, but these Habermas sees as a means of domination, first, over nature and secondly, by analogy, over people. The analogy is fishy, and Connerton says so. What he does not say (though he quotes Max Weber to that effect) is that the territory in which these ideas are transacted is dominated not only by Marx but, in equal measure, by Nietzsche.

AMONG the virtues of Connerton's book is its grounding in German intellectual history. This, as well as Habermas's outstanding work on 'the structural changes in the concept of publicity', enables Connerton to show that the absence, in that history, of a tradition of non-conformism and resistance to the ruling ideology is paralleled by the absence of a public sphere of interests — a sphere that is free from all professional considerations and ideological allegiances. It is for this reason that Marx's critique is addressed not to an open public but to a *class*. And when class antagonisms weaken and professional interests escalate, men like Marcuse (who look at American society through German eyes) feel constrained to address their proposals to such groupings as the students or ethnic minorities.

This then is the 'tragedy' of the Frankfurt 'enlightenment' as Connerton sees it: it attempted to describe the conditions in which late industrial society might be guided along a rational, non-destructive course; and these attempts foundered because they got deflected either into theories of purely individual emancipation or into an analysis of the dehumanised, self-propelling technological and administrative apparatus. Its critique failed to localise a proper public sphere: partly because that sphere appeared to the critics to have been preempted by National Socialism and therefore remained suspect, partly because it was assessed in accordance with the (Freudian) model of the private, individual psyche — a model which is inappropriate.

Of course, public opinion in Germany has been sluggish in its acknowledgement of the country's terrible past. The successive governments of Federal Germany, on the other hand, have on the whole done better than that. Irrespective of party and in spite of fossilised attitudes in the judiciary and the civil service, German governments since 1948 have been strongly and consistently influenced by a fear of Germany's own past. There is hardly any aspect of political life which has remained unaffected by a new reasonableness born of that fear: in foreign relations; in the circumspect way in which the country's economic advantages have been used on the international scene;

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and in the law-and-order policy of successive governments, though in that area, certainly, the record is far from unblemished.

Far from paralysing the country's political will, the fear of its own past has led to insight, self-awareness and enlightenment. However, it seems that it was the politicians rather than the intellectuals who have been in the vanguard. The writings of the Frankfurt School are undoubtedly the most important German contribution to the study of Western society since Max Weber. Yet these writings are not, it seems, among the sources of that practical political enlightenment: the birth and survival of non-ideological decency was not part of their brief. Paradoxically, the original leading members of the School showed hardly anything other than suspicion, hostility and contempt to those successive governments. It is K. in Franz Kafka's *The Castle* who provides the pattern of their attitude. When one of the officials shows K. a way out of the inhuman maze, he scornfully rejects it. Has he not given his entire ingenuity, every ounce of his being, to solve the riddle? It *can't* be that easy . . . □

FICTION

Judy Cooke

Pages in an album

Waking by EVA FIGES *Hamish Hamilton* £3.95
Taboo by EVA JONES *Cape* £6.50

Waking is a first person narration in which a woman's whole life and her approaching death are described in terms of seven mornings, or wakings; the dreams of the night are set against the realities of each phase of her existence and slowly merge into the reveries of the day. Infancy is a wholly physical experience, a sequence of colours and sensations. Adolescence is a prison. 'I want to close my eyes and ears, so that I cannot see, hear or smell, thick walls to shut out all sounds and give me privacy.' Marriage proves to be another kind of prison, a time when pain and fatigue swamp out 'the person I was so proud to be' and the woman lies beside an unloved, unloving husband with nothing to look forward to but the ordeal of childbirth and domestic tedium.

Up to this point, consciousness has been seen largely as a matter of suffering. The fourth, central statement is a celebration of sexual love, a sustained, lyrical passage in which the physical immediacy of infancy is recaptured and reinterpreted by the adult. 'The curtains are drawn back. It is high summer now, the longest day of the year . . . I am awake, as though for the first time . . . I am divided by a curtain of light from those days, when I counted the time of my life which had already gone, feeling my ribs tight as I stood under an empty sky, saying: soon I will be old.' Age and loss are the topics of chapters five and six; we see the savage divisions between parent and growing child, the death of friends, and of hopes, the increasing acceptance of illness and isolation. Realities begin to blur. 'I open my eyes to a faded photograph of a curtained room, light falling under the folds . . . I have a book of photographs in my head, this is only one of them. Perhaps I am only looking at the room from outside, turning the pages of my album.'

The last chapter leaves the interior setting and moves to a world in which walls and windows have vanished and light is indistinguishable from air or water. 'I have known for some time that silence and the roar of the ocean were one and the same thing so I am neither alarmed or surprised.' Death comes gently, as an act of reconciliation; it is imagined as a star on the horizon, then as a light held by the returning mother. 'She has come back to the seashore and I am safe, now that she has come to fetch me, pick me up and carry me home.'

I liked the book; its careful, polished prose conveys a wide range of emotion and experience without any sense of compression or strain and this is remarkable in such a very short text. Ms Figes can sum up a whole school of popular fiction, the nappies-and-neurosis theme, for instance, within a single chapter. Her work is soaked in literary reference, not direct quotation but allusion and paraphrase. She evokes 'subdued mornings when thick white fog curled like an animal rubbing its back against the window glass'. Eliot and Beckett are clearly her mentors; her imagery and the rhythms of her sentences recall Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*. *Waking* does not fall within my own classification of what constitutes a novel, partly because of its brevity (88 pages), partly because the interior monologue, as used here, precludes any suggestion of drama. Ms Figes would, I am sure, stand her ground on such questions of definition. No quarrel, then. Novel or prose poem, the work is one of the most enjoyable experiments in narrative.

Taboo is a story of incestuous passion, set on the borderline between reality and fantasy; it takes place in a city by the sea, in an African desert and in London but all these locations blur into one feverish mental landscape. The narrator, Marie, is young and beautiful and obsessed by her photographer brother, Vincent; she sees herself as a Cleopatra, glamorous and doomed, since she has been born out of her time. 'Four thousand years back, I am thinking hazily, in the hot gorgeous country by the Nile, nobody minded — I could have . . . damn well lived as I pleased.'

Modern society brings moral pressure to bear upon the couple and their guilty love, although fulfilled, inevitably leads to destruction. They try to escape their fate by implicating others, the overweight Emmeline, the nastily normal Nigel. Alas, Vincent has his way at the end of part two and nothing remains but sickness, disgrace and an implausible death at sea.

Eva Jones has the talent to write a full-blooded gothic romance but in this book she holds her imagination in check; as a result her characters never attain the tragic stature which her theme demands and the emotional impact of the story is weaker than it needs to be. □

Francis Wheen

Simple-minded

The Stretchford Chronicles: 25 Years of Peter Simple *Daily Telegraph* £6.75

Reviewers of most political persuasions addressed themselves to this volume when it appeared, shortly before Christmas. Richard West in the *Spectator*, speaking for the Pompous Right, detected in the book's author, Michael Wharton, the same kind of reactionary anarchism that is found 'in Malcolm Muggeridge and in some of the writers for *Private Eye* and the *Spectator*'. (Mr West happens to contribute to both papers.) West's two-page review concluded as follows: 'This book has strengthened my long-held opinion that Michael Wharton is both the funniest and the wisest writer in England.'

In the *Guardian* Simon Hoggart wrote that Wharton, despite being a crusty reactionary, is nonetheless jolly funny. Hoggart's only regret was that inhabitants of the soggy centre in politics, among whom he included himself, had no comparable humorist to call their own.

Christopher Hitchens, a man of the Left, told readers of the *Observer* that Wharton's constant harping on trendy clerics and the Third World 'can get a bit wearying'. However,

Walker Percy
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"A very good novel indeed . . . this is a book which will provoke laughter and tears."
A. N. Wilson, **New Standard**

"Like Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer* and *Lancelot*, it's a very individual and sardonic excursion into domesticated Southern Gothic, eccentricities and lunacies and whimsies hovering in the air but tethered to the matter-of-fact as well."
Anthony Thwaite, **Observer**

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Wharton 'is a muscular writer of polemic', he is 'very well informed', he is 'underestimated as a writer of nonsense', his column is graced with 'marvellous conceits' and 'running gags', and he 'can achieve absurd effects by mingling reality and fantasy'.

John Carey, in the *Sunday Times*, was the most critical: he said straighforwardly that Wharton's opinions were dangerous and wicked. Nevertheless, even Carey felt obliged to add that Wharton was a good comic writer.

In other words, while there may be some disagreement about the merits of Wharton's political views, it appears that his possession of a comic genius is beyond dispute. Yet the most striking thing about this book, which is a collection from 25 years of Wharton's Peter Simple column in the *Daily Telegraph*, is that it is not funny. The funniest and wisest writer in England turns out to be rather a stupid man, a man with no grasp of satirical or comic technique (even the most simple Bergsonian banana skin gags are beyond his ability), a man whose humorous writing is of the kind which one normally encounters in school magazines.

Let us sample the Wharton wit, as displayed in a 1975 piece by 'Doreen Gaggs', who has visited a squat organised by the Department of Theoretical and Applied Squatting at Stretchford University:

> 'I mean like we're here to make a statement about the plight of the homeless in an alienated society,' said Jim, the leader, a gentle, raucous-voiced 19-year-old who's had a varied career (after leaving university he tried to go back there but found it too alienated).
>
> 'I mean like we're here to make a statement about the plight of the homeless in an alienated society,' put in Jim, a raucous, gentle-voiced knee-length-haired 18-year-old.

Other Jims (and Jills) make their statement about the plight of the homeless in an alienated society. Wharton then concludes the piece thus:

> Whatever you think of these dedicated youngsters you've got to admit they are ready to defy conformity and think for themselves.

Even a fledgling satirist would know better than to labour a point in this way; but poor old Wharton has, over the years, demonstrated a consistent inability to avoid the galumphing approach. Consider a piece from as far back as 1958, concerning a schoolboy called Ron Frabb whose headmaster, Dimwood, has sent him home for wearing tartan jeans and an orange wig:

> Ron's father, Mr Ted Frabb, boilerman and TV enthusiast, said at his home yesterday: 'It's a scandal. Ron is not going back to school until old Dimwood apologises in the presence of a *Sunday Defective* reporter. Teenagers demand freedom in this day and age, and it's up to parents to see that they get it, and no mucking about. How can Ron ever hope to be a teenage idol and get in the big money if he isn't allowed to dress as he wants?'

Only someone of rare nincompoopishness could confuse this flabby, sliced white offering with genuine satire.

What of the other superlative which Richard West bestowed upon Wharton? Again, it is best dealt with by quoting directly from the book:

> After 36 years, during which the abominable Soviet regime has survived and flourished to the point where it now threatens to enslave the world, it may at last be allowable to ask whether, if only on the low grounds of expediency, it might not have been as reasonable for this country to make an arrangement with the Germans in 1941 as it was for the Soviet Union to make an arrangement with them in 1939.

The wisest writer in England? □

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Edna Longley

Wasting nothing

The Poetry of Edward Thomas by ANDREW MOTION *Routledge* £8.95

Identifying with 'Aspens' in his poem, Edward Thomas prophesied: 'The whisper of the aspens is not drowned.' Andrew Motion's thoughtful study should accelerate Thomas's gradual progress towards the centre of the 20th-century poetic stage, towards wide acceptance as 'one of the first, and most subtle, colonisers of the fruitful middle ground on which many subsequent poets have established themselves'. The reasons for this delayed recognition include Thomas's own delays. After years as a 'hurried and harried prose man', he began writing poetry in December 1914, at the age of '36 in the shade'. Between then and his death in the battle of Arras he produced 142 poems — hardly one dispensable. His first complete collection was published posthumously. During the post-war period, when Eliot and Pound held sway, Thomas was suspected of reactionary links with the Georgians — a half-truth crisply clarified by Motion — and the empiricism and modified traditionalism of his approach became obviously relevant only with the emergence of Larkin and Hughes. Again, the slow fuse of the poems themselves, their oblique 'language not to be betrayed', has kept Thomas's aspen outside 'the inn, the smithy, and the shop' of critical reputation-making. Poets (and common readers) have always saluted his poems, being swifter than academics to seize on what is nothing else but poetry, and to excuse the absence of kits for intellectual, sociological or aesthetic models.

And yet the purity of Thomas's poetry is another half-truth: purity may be the result either of shrinking or of intense distillation. In a sense, Thomas wasted nothing: the imperfect rural writings, the psychological problems aggravated by overwork and creative frustration, were eventually consumed and consummated, as his bonfire in 'Digging' 'burns/The dead, the waste, the dangerous,/And all to sweetness turns'. He called his poems 'quintessences of the best parts of my prose books'. Similarly, the critic secreted the artist. On the surface a non-literary poet, Thomas's knowledge of 'the tradition' could certainly have challenged T.S. Eliot's. As for his reviews of contemporary poetry (from 1901 a substantial slice of his more than a million words of reviewing), Motion almost understates the case in terming him 'mentor to an entire poetic generation'. Thomas's discriminating messianic zeal on behalf of new poetry advanced the appreciation of Yeats, de la Mare, Davies and Lawrence. He first welcomed Pound, then drew a significant demarcation-line by castigating his 'peculiarities'. Ane he largely made the reputation of Robert Frost.

A sensitive critic can rarely have reaped such rewards. Frost's practical example, together

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with his friendship, took Thomas over the borders of prose. This important transatlantic alliance — neglected by literary historians in comparison with Bloomsbury, the Lawrentian travelling-circus, and Modernist cabals — is beautifully commemorated by Thomas's poem 'The Sun Used to Shine':

> The sun used to shine while we two walked
> Slowly together, paused and started
> Again, and sometimes mused, sometimes talked
> As either pleased, and cheerfully parted
> Each night.

Imitating the related rhythms of walking and talking, Thomas appropriately proves his absorption of Frost's major lesson (a fleshing-out of his own theories): 'absolute fidelity to the postures which the voice assumes in the most expressive intimate speech.'

However, 'rumours of the war remote', no longer remote to Thomas as he wrote the poem, darken the retrospective sunlight. Motion rightly gives a chapter to Thomas as 'Patriot and War Poet', though he is unfair to William Cooke's brilliant pioneering of this angle when he announces that 'Thomas's reputation as a war poet has suffered 60 years of misrepresentation and neglect'. After all, Thomas's metamorphosis occurred in 1914, and Frost transferred to the war his personal credit as its 'only begetter', saying that the poems ought to be entitled 'Roads to France'. The war triggered Thomas's accumulated sense of England, if it also confirmed his bleakest intuitions. (Conversely, he lived out the logic of his poetry by enlisting when he didn't have to.) As Motion shows, his historical perspective, assisted by an imaginative breathing-space in training-camps, enabled Thomas to throw a long bridge over the abyss. 'As the Team's Head-Brass' is a conspicuous instance, but the tensions of all the poetry, up to 'Out in the Dark', in part symbolically dramatise a profound transition — and one which had begun before the war. Motion convincingly connects Thomas's response to the war with his concern for the changing pre-war countryside, for the decaying 'organic community'. He did believe, however, that the countryside still offered a spiritual 'home' to 'those modern people [like himself] who belong nowhere'. Several poems crystallise his prose advocacy of an unimperial version of England, a more local and inward consciousness:

> The men, the beasts, the trees, the implements
> Uttered even what they will in times far hence . . .
> ('Haymaking')

Thomas's diffused Englishness has something to say to the contemporary search for a national soul, if not a role.

Motion's freshest passages are the detailed analyses of key poems (though he can place these a little arbitrarily within an argument) and relation of Thomas's complex syntax and metric to his content: 'It is precisely this insistence on the values of becoming rather than being that is reflected in his formal practice.'

The collected poems of Edward Thomas, together with his war diaries, are now available as an OUP paperback (£2.95). □

Among this week's contributors:

EDNA LONGLEY is editor of an anthology of Edward Thomas's prose, to be published by Carcanet later this year.

J P STERN is editor of *The World of Franz Kafka*, published by Weidenfeld this week.

Simon North on Jon Silkin

In praise

The Psalms and their Spoils by JOHN SILKIN *Routledge* £2.95
Selected Poems by JON SILKIN *Routledge* £4.95

Over the last 26 years Jon Silkin has been one of the best-known poets published in England, as well as being an influential editor. *Stand*, which he founded, was the first journal to publish Geoffrey Hill's poems and it provides a quarterly shot in the arm to the habitually staid world of literary publishing. *The Psalms with their Spoils*, the latest volume from Jon Silkin himself, is illuminated by the retrospective view available from his *Selected Poems*, also published recently.

A writer who propounds a theory of writing is always in danger of forsaking, in its service, the inspiration of experience. Silkin's poems, unfortunately, often illustrate this point. The note accompanying his latest volume explains that the poems are the product of further exploration into the interaction between narrative and imagism. Maybe so, but, while it would be unfair to accuse them of pretension, their apparent precision of phrasing frequently belies a vagueness in the poet's intentions. Meanings are often lost in obscurity. It is, of course, in the nature of imagist poetry that meaning is conveyed through resonance and atmosphere rather than by specific declarations. However, it seems to me a weakness of imagist work that it can all too easily slip into over-abstract preciosity. In Silkin's case, this tendency is emphasised by a certain sentimentality which points up the frailty of some of the imagery: 'Idly, our bare souls/sprinkle the bare earth, like leaves/beaten to airy thinness.'

There is a strongly religious flavour to Silkin's latest collection, but it's a private rather than an orthodox religion. The Bible is used mainly as a source of images. Sometimes references are too esoteric to give any clear intimation of Silkin's concerns. And the close-knit quality of the syntax prevents rhythmic fluidity, thus impairing the spontaneous flow of emotional meaning. But in the poems that do work — 'Resting Place', for instance, a poem about a medieval Jewish burial ground now beneath a car-park in York — the moral sympathy is unequivocal and powerful.

There is a clue to Silkin's personal religion in the quotation from the *Psalms* which he places at the beginning of his new volume: 'Praise is comely.' Celebration and praise are recurring themes, but it is not a Whitman-like, effusive celebration; it is more sophisticated, more intellectually controlled, more English. The essence of Silkin's thought could be summed up as: our weakness makes us suffer, but this same weakness makes us human; it is our humanity that I praise. Hence, 'From earth's acids/comes/the soul of praise.' It is a paradox which produces some moving poetry, exploring that dishevelled area between aspiration and experience.

Alternating responses are evoked by *The Psalms with their Spoils*. Silkin shows himself at his worst in 'In Another Place' — prolix, awkward, sounding researched rather than spontaneous. The impact of Eliot's 'Waste Land' derives from the fact that the experience of a personal hell enabled him to see the other people's hells. Silkin's 'other place' remains too esoteric, a parochial place occupied by one rather intense soul inventing dialogue with women. The effect is like hearing the murmur of passionate conversation through the wall of a hotel room. At his best (the section 'Joy Lined with Metal' seems to me the finest) Silkin uses simple description to build up metaphorical resonance.

There are similar contradictions in the *Selected Poems*. Poems like 'On the Death of a Son' and 'Wholeness' are memorable for their passionate immediacy, pure poetic utterances issuing directly from experience. But they are not representative of Silkin's work. In general it has a more constructed, intellectual quality. Sometimes you feel that Silkin has first selected his subject matter and then set out to execute it in a rather workmanlike way. The 'Flower Poems', for instance, though accomplished, are not in the end anything more than lists of descriptive details. From 'Poesies':

> It has a group of flowers.
> Its buds shut, they exude
> A moisture, a gum, expressed
> From the sepals' metallic pressures.

This is botany, not poetry.

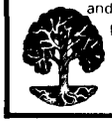
One of the most impressive features of the *Selected Poems* is its range: death and love, private life and politics, nature, satire ('Many liberals don't just/Make love, they ask each other first'), historical and narrative poems, explorations of mysticism. In spite of the frustrations aroused and not fulfilled, Silkin's poetry shows him to be a deeply sensitive and civilised man, endeavouring to explore the frequently uncivilised, brute experience of the world. □

QUENEAU'S FUNNIEST NOVEL

was first published under the pseudonym Sally Mara, because its bawdy might conflict with Raymond Queneau's reputation as philosopher, mathematician and serious novelist. *We Always Treat Women Too Well*, brilliantly translated by Barbara Wright, is set in Dublin in 1916 during the rising where Gertie Girdle, a patriotic, nubile postal clerk is shut in the Eden Quay post office with a group of rebels (£8.95). *New Writing & Writers (NWW) 18* contains Tibor Varady's full-length novel *The Secret Of The Mouse-Grey Room*, a political satire on East-European bureaucracy, stories by Copi, A.R.Lamb, Harry Mulisch and Calum Ross, poems by Yves Bonnefoy, B.C. Leale and Naiwu Osahon (£5.95 & £3.50 paper). Four novels by Alain Robbe-Grillet are now in paperback: *The Voyeur, In The Labyrinth, Topology Of A Phantom City* and *Snapshots*, the latter containing his shorter prose and critical essays (£3.50 each).

THE GENERAL STRIKE OF 1926

by R.A. Florey inaugurates our Historical perspective series with a fascinating, well illustrated examination of the issues that led to that near revolution and a description of the events (£11.95). NEW PLAYS. Four plays by Howard Barker, who brings original bite and political sophistication to his drama, are published in 2 vols: *The Love Of A Good Man* (also containing *All Bleeding*) & *That Good Between Us* (also containing *Credentials Of A Sympathiser*) £4.95 each. The doyenne of the nouveau roman, Nathalie Sarraute, is also a brilliant playwright: her *Collected Plays* contain 5 scintillating, social dramas (£4.95). Reprinted are Wedekind's seminal *Lulu Plays and Other Sex Tragedies* (£4.50) & Artaud's *Theatre And Its Double*, the manifesto of the theatre of cruelty (£3.50). *Gambit 36* covers political theatre in Europe (£1.50). Also reprinted: Christopher Small's *Music-Society-Education*, which radically reassesses past and present music in social terms (£4.95).



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John Spurling, looking at the Royal Academy's new show, finds 'the RA doesn't know the difference between good and bad art'

Big, bold and bland

LAST winter the RA made a dog's dinner of Post-Impressionism, mixing it up again with all the academic gristle from which scholars like Fry and Rewald had painstakingly separated it. *Post-Impressionism* was at least successful in terms of gate money, but if the critics' response is anything to go by this winter's show is going to cost them dear.

Part of the trouble is their publicity. *A New Spirit in Painting* is a provocative title for a show which is in no way provocative except in being non-provocative. True, it was arranged rather hurriedly and the press release alludes disarmingly to its being 'put together with great urgency and confidence', but the high claims it goes on to make are not so disarming: 'All outstanding painters of our time . . . major works . . . a formidable group of younger artists . . . a momentous introduction . . . no such exhibition has been attempted in the world for at least a decade . . . a landmark in art history'. Not many exhibitions could survive such puffery and this one is perhaps uniquely fitted to die on every word of it.

The real trouble is more deep-seated: the RA doesn't know the difference between good and bad art. They could be forgiven for including new work by such as Balthus, Bacon, de Kooning, Hockney and Warhol whose reputations make the question of good or bad secondary to curiosity about what they're up to. As it happens, all except Hockney are doing their old thing in a peculiarly lack-lustre way. Balthus has gone very grey and wooden, Bacon very glossy and neat, de Kooning is doodling and Warhol has got some new faces for his poster-portraits, including Hockney's. Hockney has intensified his colours without altering the familiar sign-language; the main result is an enormous landscape which looks like a map coloured in by Matisse. It's not exactly a new spirit in painting, but it's quite flashy.

The inclusion of the second-division names is less justifiable. I doubt if any self-respecting gallery would give wall-space to Stella's current Regent-Street-Christmas-decorations (one belongs to the Tate) or to Twombly's flaccid scribbles, ludicrously entitled Bacchanalia. They are as bacchanalian as the marks you make wiping a misted window. There is a large sci-fi laboratory scene by Matta, some late, stolid Gustons (he died last year) and work by Auerbach, Freud and Hodgkin which if you haven't seen, you'll think you have. Of course artists have every right to repeat themselves, but if they do should they be included in a show called *A New Spirit in Painting*?

The 'formidable group of younger artists' is mainly German, though there's a sufficient sprinkling of other nationalities to support the show's claim to be international. The Italian Mario Merz is not at all young nor is he a painter — he makes objects which sometimes include an element of painting — but his rhinoceros skewered with a neon light is one of the best things here. Alan Charlton, Brice Marden and Robert Ryman are minimalists who do indeed use paint at its simplest level but not in any new spirit that I can detect. There's an energetic abstract expressionist landscape by the Dane, Per Kirkeby, and a series of dreadful figure paintings which look like illustrations to a travel brochure by the revered old Frenchman, Hélion. But why the preponderance of Germans? There is not one of them who, compared with the new spirit in British painting demonstrated at the Hayward last summer, looks anything but turgid, unimaginative and bombastic. George Baselitz paints such banal figure-paintings that he even goes so far as to hang them upside down so as to lend them a spurious freshness.

Yet although Christos M. Joachimedes' introduction to the catalogue is a piece of sheer waffle which fails to suggest any cogent reason for assembling this disparate collection, there is, after all, a common denominator. With very few exceptions these paintings are big, bold and bland. They are surprisingly well hung (the RA is usually bad at hanging shows) and one can see that they are ideally suited to the entrance-halls of multinational corporations or indeed any large space where they would attract only a passing glance. There remains the 'momentous introduction', four late Picassos. 'Momentous' is of course the wrong word; they too are bland, though very beautiful and worth going to see. In spite of all I've said, this show ought to be seen, if only to keep the Academy solvent. Besides, critics have so often been wrong. It may turn out that the new spirit in international painting really is inflated academicism.

Giacometti's Annette IV (1962)

THE ARTS Council's Giacometti exhibition in Manchester contains drawings and sculptures covering the whole of his career except for the war years, which he spent mostly in Geneva, returning to Paris in 1946 with all his work in six matchboxes. That obsession with reduction had always been part of him but it is not so obvious in the pre-war pieces, whose smooth surfaces and elegant proportions lend them the scale of precious art-objects rather than of life. Influenced at first by Henri Laurens and Cubism, Giacometti was briefly associated with the Surrealists, when he made pieces scarcely less elegant, but more threateningly titled: *Woman with Her Throat Cut, Disagreeable Object.* But what a fine sculptor he was! One wishes he had somehow turned himself into two people, so that the essentially abstract line of development he was pursuing then need never have been broken off.

Until seeing this show I felt otherwise: that he only needed to remain one person and that the familiar rough-surfaced stick figures and grey, scratchy paintings which he worked on after the war and for the rest of his life were a ghastly mistake, a failure of nerve, a *cul-de-sac* and even perhaps an easy gimmick. But the more one considers them the more one understands that they were inevitable. In 1935 Giacometti returned to working from life models. In the early 1960s he made a painting of a young American called James Lord, who has now published a short book (*A Giacometti Portrait,* Faber £2.25) giving a day-by-day account of the 18 sittings. Like the sittings themselves the book is repetitious, gloomy, absurd and wholly absorbing. On Day 3 Giacometti said: 'I've been wasting my time for thirty years. The root of the nose is more than I can hope to manage'. On Day 18: 'All during the surrealist period I was haunted by the realisation that sooner or later I would have to go back to nature. And that was terrifying, because I knew at the same time that it was impossible.'

It was impossible for him because in going back to nature he switched his attention from the making of the art-object to his own perception of the live model. He was like a tightrope walker who could no longer concentrate on his act for being aware of the ground — the condition of most of us were we to attempt either the high wire or art. Yet, trapped in the same bare room of tormented self-consciousness as Beckett, Giacometti persisted, strewing his always unfinished, unsatisfactory works behind him, shadows of the real act of perception. They are not very likeable things and it seems extraordinary that they should have made him rich and famous. But they are oddly realistic, flesh transposed to bronze or paper as if by some process of incineration or mummification. The discomfort they give comes not from what they say about life or human-beings, but from what they say about art: that it is pointless, that if this is the best an outstanding sculptor can do, a mummified, incinerated version of life, then why bother? If only he could have carried on abstracting.

Germany has sent us, in addition to its sample of a New Spirit, an exhibition of African paintings and sculptures from various European collections. The national differences are striking. The Ethiopians are still following the Byzantine tradition of the Coptic Church, with formalised ranks of soldiers fighting the battle of Adowa or the life of an Olympic runner told in a row of vignettes like that of a saint or martyr. Tanzania has a school of decorative painters using high-glaze car lacquer on hardboard to depict formal arrangements of birds or animals. Zaire, not surprisingly, contributes scenes of violence and political oppression — paratroopers landing or seizing a bridge, prisoners languishing, President Mobutu entering a village in a tank surrounded by leopards. Kenya and Nigeria are each represented most memo-

A New Spirit in Painting *Royal Academy*
Giacometti *Whitworth, Manchester until 21 February; then Bristol and Serpentine, London*
Art from Africa *Commonwealth Institute*

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rably by a naive realist painter, but whereas Kenya's Ancent Soi paints homely scenes of village or urban life, Nigeria's Augustin Okoye (signing himself 'Middle Art') took part unwillingly in the Biafran War and recalls it in such scenes as*Firing Squad* and *Suffering Stages of Life*. The sculpture is mainly traditional African, the painting owes most to Europe. There is nothing here that one could yet call a New Spirit but much that is curious, sympathetic and entertaining. Art, one is pleasantly reminded, is very far from being pointless. □

TELEVISION

Julian Barnes on Ireland

Burnt Cork

'THE TROUBLES' (Thames) and *Ireland* (BBC-2) continue to pelt us, in a salutary fashion, with cobblestones of information. The most chilling item in the last couple of weeks was about a sartorial detail popular among the Black and Tans. Some of them, apparently, used to tie on to their trigger-guards a half-burnt cork. This little decoration punningly commemorated one of their fouler exploits; flicked in the face of a recalcitrant Catholic, it meant, 'We've burnt half of Cork; mind we don't do the same to your village.'

It was characteristic that this vivid and vicious detail should emerge from *The Troubles* rather than *Ireland*. The Thames series, sharp, well-scripted and pluralistic, has already overtaken Kee's programme, and not just in historical time; it has thrown some of *Ireland*'s weaknesses into brutal relief. If Kee's early programmes seemed so informative, this was in large part, one now realises, to do with one's own contributory ignorance. If his archive footage seemed haunting, that didn't mean that rival researchers couldn't come up with exactly the same clips. And if one felt that *Ireland*, because it took so long to get to the 20th century, was therefore being exceptionally thorough, one now sees that part of it was sheer narrative slowness: Kee largo, as my colleague John Coleman would doubtless put it.

Not that Rosalie Crutchley — she of the graveyard delivery — offers a more compelling voice than Kee; but the latter is frequently undercut by bouts of silly direction. Last week he started telling us something — I've quite forgotten what, so distracting was the manner from the matter — while puffing up a hill towards a large stone. He was puffing quite badly, so one assumed the hill was significant; then he sat on the stone, so one assumed that *it* was too; then, with a visual wipe to an old print, the story continued, after only a semi-colon, in blithe and full-winded voice over — and one realised that the outdoor location of the first part had no relevance at all. Kee's problem is partly that of being both narrator and authority. *The Troubles* spreads its voices and its authorities; it puts its academics and its witnesses straight to camera and lets them get on with it. They do so with telling effect. The two series may not give very different overall accounts of Irish history; but I can't imagine anyone who watches Richard Broad's *The Troubles* to the end thinking that they need continue with *Ireland:* it might all seem a bit low Kee.

Anthony Burgess's return to Malaysia after 25 years for *Writers and Places* (BBC-2) at least solved one small question: whether, for the previous week's *Maugham,* a whole BBC film crew had landed a free trip East for just a few seconds' colourful local footage. Not so. The same clips turned up again in their intended context of Burgess's film: a laudable piece of piggy-backing by Anthony Rouse, the dual producer. Perhaps Mr Rouse is secretly planning to give us a Kee-length series on Malaysia, and the novelist's visit there will prove in its turn to have been merely marsupial.

Burgess is a compelling front-man: opinionated, rumbustious, arrogant, as well as striking thrombotic terror into every viewing tailor and barber. 'I got to know the Malays rather better than Joseph Conrad,' he assured us for modest openers, as he shook his hurricane-stricken tonsure at this 'damnably enchanting country'. His film, like his return visit, began in affection and ended in disapproval. Conscious that once he could easily have become 'a snorer in lotos-land' here, the writer now found the country as irritating as it had once been charming. The tone became increasingly grouchy, until Burgess resembled more closely than he might have cared for what he in fact was: an elderly schoolmaster revisiting the classrooms where he had once held sway, and finding everything had gone to pot.

The locals had failed to grasp the useful lessons — political, cultural, philosophical — which had been made available to them by the Empire; the ruler of Perak, for example, 'finds that the West is largely a delightful toy store'. Burgess, scandalised in a Muggeridgean way that the Malaysians prefer hifi and massage parlours to Western art and opera, grandly and Greenely entitled his film 'A Kind of Failure' — the failure being his, and Britain's, with this lolling, sybaritic ex-colony. 'Must Try Harder' was Flogger Burgess's final report, and it seemed not just patronising but impudent. After all, when the writer — then in his mid-thirties — first applied for a job at his Malayan school, he thought the country was somewhere in the Channel Islands; and the various generations of British planters didn't exactly distinguish themselves by a fierce interest in the local culture. Why, one was left thinking, should the Malaysians care a sod about ours?

The Barnes Improved Scoring System for England-Wales rugby matches, instituted last year, again came up with the correct result (*Grandstand* BBC-1). The System, you may recall, is based on a differential of one point for each stitch inserted in a member of your side. In an exceptionally clean game, Geoff Wheel was twice stud-marked after being stamped on in a ruck: score 2-0 to Wales, the same margin eventually produced, following more conventional methods, by the boots of Hare and Fenwick. For the rest, the match induced a severe attack of parrot-sickness on this viewing-couch; not for the fact of England's defeat, but for its manner. They lost in the way they used to lose up till last season: butter-fingered on their own try-line and stubbornly unresponsive to experience. Having discovered that their spirited threequarters might well score tries, they promptly reverted to three-yard rushes by Scott from the base of the scrum, merely producing muddy and costive rucks. Frank Bough, promising not to leak us the score in the highlighted Scotland-France match, said this was 'because we thought you'd like to watch it unseen'. I wouldn't have minded watching some of the preceding match unseen as well. □

ROCK MUSIC

Mark Kidel on new releases

Head-banging

CHRISTMAS is over, but its aftermath still lingers in the corridors of the rock world; for December brings out the worst in the record industry. The market is deluged with mediocre product at the best of times, but towards the end of November the avalanche grows to horrific proportions, and it becomes very difficult to pick out the gold or even silver among the piles of rubbish. The Clash, with characteristic bravura, and with an ear for the cash registers, issued a triple album in mid-December (*Sandinista,* CBS FSLN 1X), a successor to their strong double *London Calling*. This time, however, they have gone too far and the padding almost totally obscures the many moments of brilliance. They express once again the anger and despair that made them famous, with a series of anthems about everything from small independent record labels to nuclear war; the music is mostly very danceable, but the best tracks would easily fit on to a single album.

While a studio triple album may be something of an exception, we have come to expect live doubles at this time of the year from well established bands like the Eagles (*Eagles Live*; Asylum K62032) and Deep Purple (*Deep Purple in Concert*, Harvest SHDW412). The Eagles have thrown together their most popular songs, performed live at a number of West Coast gigs last summer, and the results offer little more than carbon copies of the highly polished studio versions. Deep Purple's set, on the other hand, has a certain historical value, with tracks recorded for the BBC *In Concert* radio programmes in 1970 and 1972, in the days before heavy metal had become a dirty word. These were occasions on which Deep Purple played with great verve: it is perfect music to have Ursula Le Guin fantasies to, with screams and frantic, elongated guitar solos that seem as dated as Wagner; a must for the more sophisticated biker and head-banger, and excellent value with an average of 25 minutes playing time per side.

Something of the same cliff-hanging excitement pervades another much more recent live recording — *Play*, by Howard Devoto's group Magazine (Virgin V2184). Devoto is a chronicler of internalised *angst*, pouring out his various insecurities, rather than ranting at the external state of the world: 'time flies, time crawls/like an insect up and down the wall', he moans with echoes of Dostoievski. New guitarist Robin Smith has added strength and a new breadth of expression to the band, and there is ample justification for releasing this live collection of previously available material. Unlike Deep Purple's faded memories, Magazine are very much of this moment, minstrels of future shock.

Joni Mitchell's live double album *Shadows*

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and Light (WEA K 62030), out a few months before Christmas, presents a sharp contrast to the Eagles' very measured set, for her concerts are always adventures in improvisation, supported as she now always is by a team of eminent jazzmen. Guitarist Pat Metheny is the latest to join her band, and he makes a fine contribution to the album, with his very expressive yet concise style. His own latest recording *80/81* (ECM 80/81), with saxophonists Dewey Redman and Mike Brecker, Charlie Haden on bass and Jack de Johnette on drums, takes a very different direction from *American Garage* (ECM 1155) recorded a year previously with his own, more rock-orientated band. The new double was recorded by German jazz impresario Manfred Eicher in Oslo, and the whole tone is much harder and a good deal less lyrical than familiar Metheny material. The musicianship is of a very high standard, but there are only a few passages of sustained inspiration. Metheny himself, unfortunately, plays a backseat role, the convener of the occasion rather than its star.

Mike Brecker turns up again as one of a number of star session-men who grace the tracks of Steely Dan's latest album *Gaucho* (MCA 6102), a cool and sophisticated excursion into the vein of jazz-rock which Donald Fagen and Walter Becker have made their own. They have strayed a very long way from the days when they first borrowed their name from a dildo in *The Naked Lunch*, breaking new ground with three outstanding albums that combined smoothness, invention, excitement and lyrical weirdness. *Gaucho* is tasteful, but the gloss has taken over, and it is considerably more impressive than heart-warming. There are plenty of appealing details, short instrumental phrases which only reach the ear after repeated listening, and the title track is as thrilling as anything they have ever done but, sadly, it is an exception.

WEATHER REPORT have been around for just as long, and they face some of the same problems, with over half a dozen albums behind them. It is their particular mix of highly structured ensemble playing and loose improvisation which has kept the band from sinking into the kind of formula that has nearly stifled Steely Dan's undoubted brilliance out of existence. *Night Passage* (CBS 84597) is a little dull compared to some of the band's early albums, when they explored a wide range of African rhythms: their present style is closer to mainstream jazz, but the combination of Shorter's fruity sax, Pastorius's wailing bass and Zawinual's versatile keyboards and synthesiser wizardry can still produce passages of great magic.

Rod Stewart too, for all his bank accounts, can still summon up the old magic, particularly around Christmas time: his latest album, *Foolish Behaviour* (Riva RVLP11), suggests that there is plenty of fire left in the man: he is still a great white soul shouter, whether it is on riotous numbers like 'Gi'me Wings' or on pleading ballads like 'Say It Ain't True'. The material on the album is uneven, but there are enough good singles on it to guarantee its commercial success. The best pure dance record of the season —and Rod's tunes are a little too emphatic for really good dancing — has been Robert Palmer's *Clues* (Island ILPS9595), released several months ago, but still as fresh as when the title track first hit the airwaves as a single. Palmer — once with Vinegar Joe — has moved with the times, enhancing his very rhythmic body-music with subtle use of the synthesiser — and even on one track a guest appearance by Gary Numan: it is very refreshing to be able to listen to both sides of an album right through without getting bored.

The same can be said for a completely different album — *Ambient 3 — Days of Radiance* (EG Records AMB3) — the third in a series produced by Brian Eno, and featuring Laraaji, an American zither player. Like the music on many of Eno's other productions, the mood is meditative, and the style cyclic rather than linear: it moves very slowly, change occurring at an almost subliminal level. Laraaji's zither has nothing to do with the tuneful tinkling of Anton Karas's 'Theme from the Third Man': he uses the instrument as a point of departure for the creation of waves of interpenetrating sounds and echoes. He describes it as healing music, and it has a rich, cleansing quality, far from the frenzy, despair or sophistication displayed on the various other records reviewed in this column. □

THEATRE

Benedict Nightingale

Beyond belief

Passion Play by PETER NICHOLS *Aldwych*
The Workshop by JEAN-CLAUDE GRUMBERT *Hampstead*
Naked Robots by JONATHAN GEMS *Warehouse*

Here's an oddity to consider. The eternal triangle became the most numbing of theatrical clichés at a time when, one can confidently claim, eternal triangles themselves were considerably fewer than they are today; and now, when every fashionable audience positively bulges with the selfsame geometry, it has all but vanished from our stages. This seems to me a pity and not altogether a pity, logical and illogical. Logical, because in a more morally offhand climate our collective knickers, whatever else they may be doing, are clearly not going to get into such a twist about other people's sexual business. Illogical, because even those who believe that the seventh commandment has no further place in ethical discussion must admit that adultery's human — and therefore dramatic — effects can be considerable. Harold Pinter proved just this when he resurrected and somewhat reshaped the eternal triangle two years ago, and Peter Nichols re-emphasises the point now. *Betrayal* successfully concentrated, not on the flouting of old absolutes, but on deception, suspicion, unease, internal confusion: to precisely which list *Passion Play* adds two vital and indisputably contemporary ingredients, namely pain and damage.

That's not to say the play isn't also funny, especially when the affair between Benjamin Whitrow's 50-year-old husband and father and Louise Jameson's over-age Lolita is in its embryonic stages. It is, very, thanks largely to the introduction of a dramatic device that will have every playwright in the country gnawing his beard and wondering why he didn't think of it first. As Whitrow launches into his double life, he literally acquires a double, a paunchier, grosser version of himself played by Anton Rodgers; and as Billie Whitelaw's wife hears of his indiscretions, on comes a raddled, hangdog Eileen Atkins, her increasingly disconsolate alter ego. Thus husband B can mutter 'talk more, you usually talk more' while husband A tries to maintain an innocent front, and wife B can wail 'think of nothing or you'll cry' while wife A coolly quizzes the vengeful 'friend' who has just destroyed her married complacency. Thus Nichols can vastly elaborate his main characters' thought-processes without recourse to cumbersome asides, and thus he can show each of them struggling with lust, remorse, jealousy, anger, pride, fear, or whatever other emotion threatens to bisect them. This is what it's like to live with at least two faces.

For all the humour the contrasts produce, it's an ugly way of life, and becomes increasingly so as the play progresses. Nichols is remarkably fair to his protagonists, seeing each from outside while keeping up a powerful flow of frontline dispatches from within. She has perpetrated her own sexual treacheries; he suffers from the hunger-for-experience of the ageing, faithful and desperate. But behind their author's sympathetic smiles there's a sort of appalled disbelief, a blend of horror and disgust initially apparent in his insistence on physical minutiae: the techniques of obliterating give-away smells, or, in the intercepted letter that tells Miss Whitelaw the truth, lickerish descriptions of mutual suckings and gropings, wine spat from mouth to mouth or pudenda paddled while she herself is in the next room. And Mr Nichols's feelings become still plainer as the husband's obsession intensifies, doubt and mistrust become the wife's way of life, and events get more and more gruesome. Anguish, recrimination, mental decline, an impotent show of violence, even a suicide attempt: the logic of incompatible emotions helplessly pursued from their hesitant beginnings to their somewhat squalid end.

The purpose of the play's second half, absurdly criticised for redundancy by some, is to chronicle this emotional escalation, further explore the characters' ambiguities, especially the husband's curiously dispassionate passion and loveless love, and (not least) to put their predicament in a larger perspective. The play's punning title is, of course, absolutely deliberate. Religious references are everywhere, in the protagonists' jobs and recreations, in the requiem masses she sings while he's copulating at home, in the crucifixion-scenes he restores while she festers next door, in the joint Christmas festivities that bleakly close the play. Their mutual disenchantment, we're persistently reminded, is paralleled and partly caused by a larger loss of faith; and, though I'm not sure this apercu takes us as far as Mr Nichols hopes, it undeniably increases the play's scope and complexity. When the husband nostalgically imagines a world freed from Christian taboos on sexual self-expression, he's both adding a dimension to the general debate (perhaps monogamy *is* unnatural) and indulging in shoddy seducer's rhetoric. Here, elsewhere, the play leaves you thinking and feeling two or three conflicting things at once.

It isn't flawless. Mr Nichols makes valiant efforts to explain the girl's sexual psyche, but I still wondered if the cool, untouchable, yet infinitely available sexpot played by Ms Jameson didn't owe more to middle-aged fantasy than workaday truth. I mean, no one ever seems to throw herself at *me* like that. Again, it's logical that the fleshy Rodgers should sometimes become husband A as the affair develops, and that the hunted Atkins should similarly be promoted from an internal voice to the wife who unburdens herself to a silent shrink and

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crams her maw with sleeping pills: it also makes things confusing, especially at the end, which is positively arcane. Yet again, the ruse of playing some events simultaneously, so that the wife peruses her husband's epistolary canoodlings while he's still composing them, does much for the evening's pace and compactness, but sometimes makes you wish you could aim your eyes in two directions at once.

Yet it would be grudging to say one more word against a piece so sensitively played by its principals, so fluently directed by Mike Ockrent, so technically ambitious and emotionally trenchant in itself. Was it my imagination that sensed increasingly uneasy shiftings, flinchings and wincings among the massed sophisticates at the Aldwych last week, as a sexual scenario too plausible for comfort, too riveting for mental escape, gradually unfurled? Perhaps; but even those who sustained detachment must have been impressed by the richness of Mr Nichols's struggle to make sense of menopausal angst. Here's desire, distaste and resentment, bitter resentment at a sexual thralldom that's also a comfort and joy; here's yearning for moral certainties, exasperation with emotional rules, pervasive awareness of the propinquity of death, and no clear understanding of how to react to it; and more. I don't think Peter Nichols has written better.

The week's remaining offerings both have some documentary usefulness. *The Workshop* tells you something of what it would be like to wield a needle alongside the women at a gents' tailors, and also something of how it felt to be in France just after the war. Was it really better living under the Americans than under the Germans? More specifically, what had happened to all those French Jews? At what point was it possible to conclude that someone 'deported' by the Nazis actually was dead, and perhaps give his widow a pension? Such questions are deliberated, not grandly from above, but from the stance of the unconsidered survivors, the human ants scratching a living in the corners of society. Lee Montague is the beleaguered boss, Lynn Farleigh, Sandy Ratcliff and others his private proletariat; and very authentic, amusing and even touching they manage to be.

If one can't say as much for Raad Rawi, Trudie Styler and the rest of John Caird's cast at the Warehouse, it reflects less on their quality than that of *Naked Robots* itself, a play that badly needs treatment-in-depth at the theatrical barbers. Still, it too is informative, and may be warily recommended to those who want to know more about squats, drugs, the music industry, avant-garde trousers, sci-fi dresses, sexual cavortings, and much else vaguely classifiable as the 'youth scene'. And if that makes you feel old, be grateful. The play proves you're very well out of it. □

FILMS

John Coleman

Faites vos jeux

Atlantic City (AA) *Curzon*
Divine Madness (AA) *Warner West End 4*
Willie & Phil (X) *Ritz; Gate 3, Camden Town*

A director of great range and address, Louis Malle has taken — and given — pleasure during the past decade in tiptoeing through the taboo. In *Le Souffle au Coeur* it was incest between mother and son; *Pretty Baby* circled around child prostitution. His films in general benefit enormously from beguiling photography and good dialogue. *Atlantic City* is no exception in either department (Richard Ciupka on camera, words by John Guare) and contrives to make pretty fair entertainment out of a plot where happiness hinges on cocaine-pushing and murder. The newly revived New Jersey resort, boardwalks echoing with the crash of falling buildings as it busies itself becoming a brash gambling Mecca rivalling Las Vegas, is the eerie, ideal setting for has-beens and would-bes to come together in a mutual furthering of dubious ambitions. Known as 'the lungs of Philadelphia' a century ago, it is now nicely calculated to provide artificial respiration for fantasies. A globe-trotter, Malle knows his way around and he explores the mercurial, gimcrack side of America like a demon lover. It is very hard to resist his blandishments.

Burt Lancaster is ageing Lou, a long-resident numbers runner and poodle-walker, nursemaid and occasional lover to a hypochondriac ex-belle who came to town for a Betty Grable look-alike contest and never left. Also living in his rundown apartment block is Sally (Susan Sarandon), a fugitive from Saskatchewan, training to be a croupier at the nearby casino under the suave, interested care of Joseph (Michel Piccoli). Their paths cross when the girl's husband returns with her heavily pregnant sister, a superannuated flower-child for whom he deserted Sally. This Dave has lifted a bundle of cocaine belonging to others and is soon killed for his pains, but not before using old Lou as his stash and middle-man. Suddenly rich, Lou blossoms into a snappy white suit and a tangled, tender, explosive relationship with Sally, to her bemusement taking charge of funeral arrangements for dead Dave, to her delight feeding her at a posh restaurant, to her fury turning out to be doing all this on the proceeds of her husband's theft. How Lou exultantly finds gangsterish pride at the right end of a gun and those not dead seem destined to live happily ever after are items we may leave to the film's successful legerdemain.

Lancaster and Sarandon, bruised January and free-wheeling May, play potentially awkward scenes deftly, helped by some cracking lines. 'Hey, it's nothin',' boasts the white-haired old villain, after an act of phoney largesse. 'Sinatra gives wings to hospitals. We all do what we can.' 'Who *was* Bugsy Siegel?' asks Sally later, deflating an ancient lie of his by ignorance. There are some sparkling supporting roles and performers — Kate Reid as Grace, the cantankerous semi-invalid; Piccoli as the top croupier, lending Sally cassette-French and an aria from *Norma;* Hollis McLaren as the loopy sister, a compendium of freak beliefs, telling of Indians met on the road and their 'dynamite mushrooms'. And an eye for details — the gaudy clutter of Grace's bedroom, the cut lemons Sally rubs her body with to rid it of the fish-stink of the Oyster Bar where she works days, the downbeat ironing board in Lou's place — keep the piece pinned to an essential ground of reality.

'DIVINE MADNESS' is the merrily blistering record of Bette Midler in concert at Pasadena, filmed over four days. That Michael Ritchie, the Ritchie who made the beauty contest send-up *Smile,* directed it might must be apparent to the superalert from an opening sequence where a head usher briefs his red-blazered girls about last week's mishandling of an epileptic: '. . . you couldn't even *hear* Chopin's Polonaise because everyone was talking about that seizure'. He is truly aggrieved, and as clearly apprehensive about their coming attraction. With cause. The one-off Ms Midler, foul mouth extraordinary, is lowered to the stage from a giant tray and stays verbally crouched from then on, refusing to tell the 'taco joke' despite cries from her ravished audience —after all, 'this is the time-capsule version of my show' — but letting fly with enough ear-curdling material to make one wonder what possibilities a taco has that she has elsewhere ignored.

Teetering about as if the outrageously giant black-feathered tail she wears at first had been planted and not attached, savaging several of her ballads with a fine wickedness ('My Way' becomes a stretcher-case), *compelling* complicity, the lady is a tramp of genius. To hear her swiftly working over Prince Charles and Princess Anne is already something, but she caps it with a snake-like flick of the tongue as she moves on to the House of Monaco. The blitz is unrelenting, if beautifully relieved by tiny traces of high literacy. Offering, unavailing, to 'eschew vulgarity', she relishes each syllable of the phrase. The next second, she is aghast at the depths to which she can sink, 'Oh, I can't *believe* I've been reduced to telling *fart* jokes!'

Her physical resemblance to Mae West ends around the sardonic nose and mouth, for she is the essence of the uncorseted in her motions, which go from the whoop-a-doop zany to the fast and agile. Those three weird sisters, the Harlettes, follow her anywhere in the hypnotic transformations of her brief, scurrilous traffic. The most objectionable moment comes (for some of my colleagues, at least) in an episode entailing fragments of mime: I found it reminded me of the Guilietta Masina of *La Strada* and bought most of it. All those in need of a bracing dose of scatology, cleansingly interrupting a series of songs ranging from belted hot-gospel sounds to the sentimental with a dash of bitters, should scurry to the Warner.

Paul Mazursky's *Willie & Phil* founders on a fundamental misprision. Anyone who has not seen Truffaut's *Jules et Jim* may well wonder what it is about; anyone who has, *why* it is about. There are certain acts it is plain foolish to try to follow; and to pay a prolonged homage to a beloved film by using it as a launching-pad (Willie and Phil of the title meet coming out of a showing of the Truffaut) and then merely going on to update its basic premise of a *ménage à trois* down the years is not so much hazardous as futile. Mazursky's anaemic charmer claims to follow Jewish Willie (Michael Ontkean), a teacher of EngLit, and Italo-American Phil (Ray Sharkey), a photographer of commercials, from 1970 to the present day as they lovingly revolve around honest, wilful Jeannette (Margot Kidder), to whom they are presumably in thrall because of her habit of lifting her upper lip gum-high when she smiles. It *is* quite endearing, as habits and smiles go, but hardly sufficient to warrant their reiterated proposition, 'Our destinies are interlocked for ever', or to obliterate the crucial and crushing memory of Jeanne Moreau. Some of the parental incomprehension, however justified, is amusingly presented and the trio seem nice people. The effect, however, is of a dragged-out paid advertisement for Doing Your Own Thing — or, rather, Her Thing. Come back, Jules & Jim. □

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TRAVEL

Geoffrey Saltmarsh with ideas for cheap foreign holidays

Cut-price ways of escape

THIS AUTUMN, most of the top people in the travel business will be in personal need of one of the *five million* holidays they are trying to sell to the rest of us in 1981.

The economic crisis, it's expected, will restrict the purchasers of foreign holidays to the same sort of level as 1980 (admittedly a record year). But the tour operators, ignoring all warnings, have made many more holidays available. In consequence, their marketing skills, and the capacity for financial survival, will be tested to the limit. Another consequence will be an extraordinary bonanza for the alert consumer.

Every bit of holiday money will go further than it ever has before, or, for that matter, will go again. Already, holiday prices are a very good bargain. But this year, given the near-certain knowledge that there will be an excess of holidays on the market in spring and early summer, consumers will be able to play a waiting game. When operators begin to realise that charter flights are likely to go half empty, they will cut their prices in order to minimise losses.

Publicly, bold faces are presented. Ivor Elms, president of the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) says: 'The tour operators have made a big investment and they have researched the market well.' And, as he said, the industry's confidence benefits from a surprising anomaly: business is often better in a recession, because people like to get away.

But Dr Paul Neild, of the stockbrokers Phillips & Drew, told the last ABTA conference: 'I don't know how you have managed to escape so far . . . the next 12 months will be a lot trickier.' This year, he predicted, would see no increase in disposable income, and even in 1982 consumer spending would remain static.

OIL PRICES press heavily upon airlines and tour operators, and are the cause of one of the major frictions between companies and consumers. Given that brochures are usually priced as much as a year in advance, it's understandable that late extra charges are sometimes justified.

But there was growing unrest about the practice last summer, and the Office of Fair Trading put pressure on ABTA. The result is some tightening of regulations, so that tour operators now have to give details of extra costs (oil-price rises, currency fluctuations, or whatever). If troubled conditions persist in the Middle East, holidaymakers may have to expect some unpredictable extras, and be ready to wrestle with a certain amount of fine print.

Last year, of course, was an interesting one in the airline world: British Airways showed a huge loss after predicting profits, then dropped a clutch of unprofitable services. The three big transatlantic carriers, BA, Pan Am and TWA all played a leap-frog game of trying to be cheapest. But they were all surpassed by the charismatic Freddie Laker, who produced some of the cheapest fares to the US West and East coasts.

For travellers this year, careful research will pay. Just now, the Laker walk-on fare (you cannot book more than seven days in advance) is £156 return London/New York, rising to £190 between 15 June and 30 September. For the moment, BA's lowest one-way to New York is £77, standby. BA is offering £216 return on standby to Los Angeles, where Laker's walk-on is £218, rising to £260 in summer. (For those wanting standby flights, there are usually seats for New York available at Heathrow with BA, Pan Am, TWA, Air India and El Al. Check with a travel agent on available US domestic travel bargains to add to your transatlantic ticket.)

Compare also the prices from Jetsave, which pioneered cheap flights to America and Canada, and produces numerous American holiday packages. With BA, it offers daily flights Heathrow/New York at (return) £185 to £291, depending on departure date, between 1 April and 31 October. Los Angeles ranges from £269 to £377. Cheap tickets are also sold through unlicensed travel agents ('bucket shops').

PUBLICITY about transatlantic bargains has been accompanied by complaints about the cost of flying to Europe, but research, again, can minimise cost because many holiday firms — among them Thomson, Laker Holidays, Cook's, Horizon, Wings, OSL, Grecian and Falcon — sell cheap seats on their charters, and publish separate leaflets with details.

Thomson's schedule, current until April, offers a Gatwick/Malaga return from £64: Laker's fare varies between £82 and £113 according to departure and length of stay. The cheapest scheduled fare (BA or Iberia) is £103 for a night flight with restrictions.

A word of warning about cheap flights for reaching Greece: the authorities have announced a clampdown on charters carrying passengers not on bona-fide package tours, because they believe the effect is to take business away from the Greek state airline. There is

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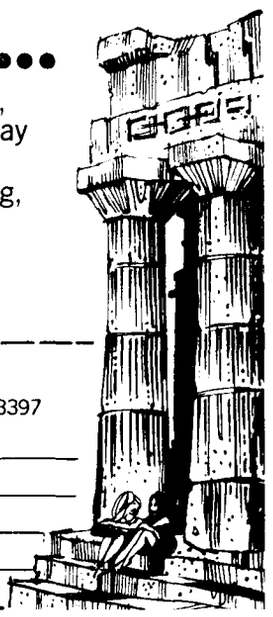

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a risk of being sent home if you arrive by charter without an accommodation voucher.

A solution (even cheaper) is to go by coach, and the option becomes increasingly popular. European Express Supercoaches (who clip £5 off for students) offer all-year return trips to Athens for £79-92, including an overnight stop in Austria. Paris fares start at £12. It's £69 for St. Tropez.

STRIKES PERMITTING, cross-channel will be a bargain because of price-warfare between Sealink, Townsend Thoresen and P&O. Sealink's present winter rate from Dover and Folkestone to Boulogne and Calais is £12.50 for a car and driver and £7 per passenger. Townsend has pegged passenger fares at £7 for 1981 on Dover-Calais and Dover-Zeebrugge routes.

But reductions will multiply as peak holiday-time approaches. Ferries are good value because duty-free purchases can offset cost: to continue inexpensively through Europe, check out the continental railways and their student discounts.

More than ever, the youngest and most resilient holidaymakers will get the best bargains. Companies like Club 18-30, Twentys, Young World and Singles aim packages specifically at the young, with resorts where all the other inmates are of the same generation. Club 18-30 offers Greece, Spain, Italy, Hong Kong, Miami and Los Angeles, and camping holidays. Two weeks' in Cattolica with full board & lodging is available for £177. NAT Holidays offer camping in ready erected tents throughout France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Greece.

Travel is by the company's coach (or you can drive yourself) and there are also camping holidays by coach. One of the cheapest options is eight days in Le Trepont, Normandy, priced between £50 and £65.

Intasun has some very low-priced US package holidays, both East and West coast, with prices starting at £149 for a week in Miami (it doesn't include meals).

AMERICAN CAMPING is also worth examining. Trek America's brochure covers cities and national parks, with a dozen different itineraries: the longest being nine weeks New York/Los Angeles, taking in Florida, New Orleans and the Grand Canyon. Travel is by mini-bus, in small groups of 18/38-year-olds: all equipment except sleeping bags is provided, and 'trekkers' contribute to a food kitty. But you must hunt out the best cheap transatlantic flight for yourself.

Thomson runs a 'Wanderer' programme to Greece which provides a return flight with accommodation-vouchers and a list of 50 pensions and tavernas. Prices begin at £124 for seven nights in Corfu and £152 for 14 nights in Halkidiki.

Going one stage further, working holidays can be cheaper still. Watch for advertisements for grape-picking and other outdoor tasks in France, or consult the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges at 43 Dorset Street, London W1. And American groups have been advertising recently for counsellors to work at children's summer camps.

Kibbutz holidays start at £169 with Worldwide Student Travel of 37 Store Street, WC1. Volunteers for 36 to 40 hours work a week, mainly agricultural, receive accommodation and a student charter flight (but minimum stay is six weeks). Thatcher's Britain, 1981, will surely be a tough place to be in. But it will also be unusually easy to get out of. □

NEXT WEEK: Windsurfing in The Gambia (mosquitos included).

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Weekend competition

No 2652 **Set by Ms de Meaner**

The denizens of the book-reviewing cubby-hole some floors down have passed up to us a book just published by Pergamon Press. It's by Leonid Brezhnev and is entitled *Socialism, Democracy and Human Rights*. We'd like compers to provide suggestions for similarly unlikely books that contemporary figures might write. Max. 10 goes each; by 6 February.

No 2649 **Set by A. Boteman**

Sixteen lines of verse containing at least a dozen words or phrases commonly found on notices.

Report **By Mercy Dash**

You must all have made New Year resolutions to work extra hard at your comping. Yet more sacksful of ingenuity were heaved up to the complex this week. Interestingly, sign-boards made you think of sex (but then *everything* seems to make you think of sex), of the present political scene and of the after-life. Hon. menshes (of the non-commercial kind) for Abu-Abu who got 65 separate notices into his 16 lines and to Stanley Shaw for his touching poem about redundancy. Eight of the best for the winners.

Gentlemen: In my *opening today*
I have some *strictly private* things to say.
If *U-turn* down your status as my yes-men
By passing information to the *press*men
Just *mind your heads*, for they will surely roll.
Take caution — 1 in 10 are on the dole.

Now wash your hands of any lingering doubt
That *cash in* has to tally with *cash-out*.
Do not de*lay by* raising ifs and buts;
I'm *warning* you — *keep right* on making cuts
And don't *give way to let*ters of petition.
Silence the *public; bar* all opposition.

I want loyal *members only* — I've *no pets*,
No vacancies for wobblies or for wets.
So don't be *cross now*, Mr St John Stevas —
Please close the door behind you as leave us.

NINA HIBBIN

Through the airy *lay-by*,
By the smelly *Gents*.
No parking is allowed here;
Beware the live-wire fence.
Busking is forbidden,
Sound no horns together,
And *commit no nuisance*,
No picnics in the heather.

Queue this side for Porton,
Please keep off the grass,
No through road beyond this point,
Or get shot up in the arse.
Trespassers are prosecuted,
The *dust cloud* here is dense,
So make sure that you *give way*
To the *Ministry of Defence*.

P.W.R.FOOT

No parking. No waiting. No turning. Wherever one goes,
One's eyes are confronted by 'Noes'.
No dogs. No coaches. No bathing. Like some bossy aunt,
Officialdom says, whatever you want to do, you can't.

Keep left. Keep right. Keep off the grass.
Tch tch, things have come to a pretty pass.
You can drive for miles and miles and never see *teas*,
Only *private, shut, keep out*, and churlish signs like these;
And I really must complain
About the bullying sergeant-majorish tone of *get in lane.*
But *toilets* — there are few sights that make one gladder,
Particularly if about to burst one's bladder.
(The doors used to be helpfully labelled *Ladies and Gentlemen* in there,
Now they have these new-fangled His'n'Hers Euro-symbols, it's harder to tell who goes where).
But I cherish most among my traveller's joys
The sign that said: *High School for Girls.*
Preparatory for Boys.

STANLEY J.SHARPLESS

Heaven welcomes careful drivers —
No entry till you're dead.
Don't *slow down*, take the *scenic route*
(Dual carriageway) instead.

No trespassing, no smoking
On the road to Paradise;
No litter please, *no parking*,
Heavy penalties for vice.

Diverted traffic this way,
Down *Self-Service* Avenue.
Fasten seatbelts, gentlemen —
The gradient's *one in two.*

No exit. If you have complaints
Direct them to St P.
Hell's *management cannot accept*
Responsibility.

WENDY COPE

'Beware! No entry!'
She cried *in* dismay,
'This *entrance* is *private*,
There's no *right of way.*'

'Though I'm not *for sale*
Slow quiet coercion
Might lead me *to let*
You *in* for *diversion.*'

'You may enter,' she cried
'Keep left at the *bend*,
Reduce speed as you
Approach the *dead end.'*

'Caution! There's *danger!*
Out! Children I fear;
I'll have *no litter:*
Engage lower gear!

PETER ALEXANDER

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NB: National Book Sale starts February 14.

Tony Miles
Chess

No 214 **Most brilliant game**

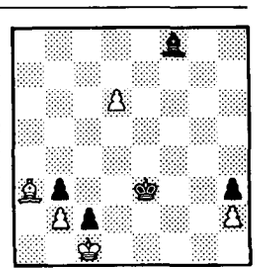
With the profusion of Swiss-system tournaments in recent years the all-play-all has become almost non-existent in this country. Although Swisses are very useful and rather more economical to run, they never really have the same atmosphere or need the same approach as a 'real' international event. thus Ray Keene's Brighton International fills an important gap in the British chess calender, providing an excellent opportunity for up-and-coming players to acclimatise themselves to serious tournament play. The second such tournnament was held in December. The first, a year before, had resulted in an overwhelming win for Jon Speelman with 8½/9; this time it was a far more closely-run contest. In fact, with just one round to play, no less than four players shared the lead: GM Speelman and IMs Taulbut, Chandler and Day with 5½/8. In the final round Speelman beat Goodman and Chandler overcame Day, But Taulbut surprisingly went down to the tail-ender Tisdall.

So first place was shared by Chandler and Speelman with 6½ and Day and Taulbut were 3rd equal on 5½. Van der Vliet (Holland) scored 5 and Watson and Goodman 4½. Van der Vliet and Watson both achieved FIDE Master norms. The following was adjudged the most brilliant game.

White: J. Tisdall **Black: D. Cummings**

1.P-Q4, N-KB3; 2.P-QB4, P-K3; 3.N-KB3, P-QN3; 4.P-K3; B-N2; 5.B-Q3, P-Q4; 6.0-0, B-Q3; 7.N-B3, 0-0; 8.P-QN3, P-QR3; 9.B-N2, QN-Q2; 10.Q-K2, P-B4. A double-edged decision. The alternative is to keep the centre closed with 10. . .N-K5 **11.BPxP, KPxP; 12.QR-B1, R-K1; 13.B-B5, N-K5; 14.PxP, NxN; 15.BxN, PxP; 16.Q-Q3, N-B1; 17.KR-Q1, N-N3; 18.P-N3, P-QR4; 19.R-Q2, Q-N3; 20.B-R1, QR-Q1.** Slightly inconsistent. 20 . . .P-R5 to open lines on the Qside would give much-needed counterplay. Now the hanging pawns come under fire. **21.B-R3, B-KB1; 22.B-KN2, P-R3; 23.Q-B2, Q-R2; 24.Q-Q1, Q-R1; 25.N-K1, B-K2; 26.Q-B2,R-Q2; 27,Q-B5, R(1)-Q1; 28.N-Q3, Q-R2; 29.P-KR4.** The initiative spreads to the kingside. **29. . . BKB1; 30.P-R5, N-K2; 31.Q-N4, N-B3.** The only way to defend the BP, but it allows a decisive combination. **32.NxP! P-B4!** Of course not . . . BxN; 33.QxP mate. **33.QxP! BxN; 34.RxP, RxP.** If 34 . . . B-Q3; 35.Q-K6ch wins. **35.BxRch, K-R1; 31.BxPch! Resigns.** On 36 . . . KxB, 37.Q-N6ch mates.

Problem 214
White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked no later than 4 February.



Solution 212
1 . . . NxPch! 2.BxN, P-R4! (threatening 3 . . .PxN; 4.BxP, BxB; 5.QxB, N-Q6) 3.R(2)-N1, Q-N4! winning a pawn and the game.

Note: As our chess readers will realise, last week's column should have been entitled October problems.

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Salamanca: 38
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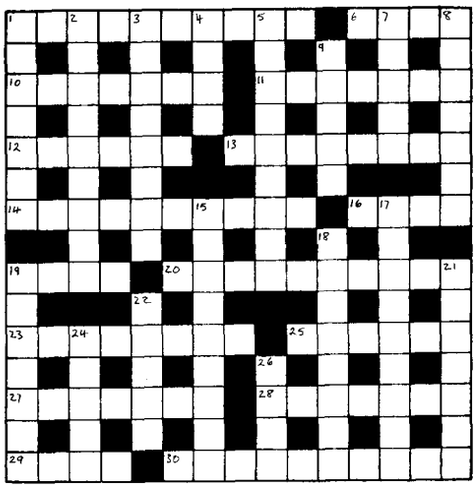
PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions, opened. Entries to Salamanca 38, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 3 February.



All words are in Chambers 1977, though 3 appears as part of a definition. (Plus: The answers 11, 29, 20, 13, 30 and 22, 14, 12, 6, 1Ac. may be regarded as non-definitive cryptic clues Across and Down respectively to a 5 x 5 word-square which solvers may like to compose.)

ACROSS

1 Initially she's about to get results with soft material for moulding (10)
6 Some crystal as employed to be suitable for use as a light amplifier (4)
10 Mystery of a spirit contained in a vessel (7)
11 Drunken rake in back of local going to pieces (7)
12 Plant found in leas etc., mostly wild (6)
13 It's tamer to handle wrongly? (8)
14 One thoroughly proficient after serving with commander of old sailing-ship? (10)
16 I'm devoted to crazy practices — such — — eccentricity! (4)
19 Ungentle — rugged — having rough edges (4)
20 Reliable expedient by which to differentiate Germanic languages (10)
23 Gang (Italian) acquiring endless loot (8)
25 Distilled orange oil (first extracted in the past) (6)
27 Tree-resin that's flowed in cut groove (7)
28 Able to see the way at night, but with direction in day etc. lost? (7)
29 They hail first sign of aurora and see sun round east (4)
30 New beginning to chapter relies on consequent notes (2 words, 10)

DOWN

1 Goneril or Oswald as leading monkey (7)
2 Stupid dunce — that describes girl not even in The Remove? (9)
3 A vessel mostly remade into the home of a salt (8)
4 Church showing love for one in old verse (4)
5 Like permafrost perhaps, black, in sun melting — see water within (9)
7 Joint of beef — not round? (5)
8 It couldn't be experienced by one that's frivolous externally and hard on the inside (7)
9 Small shield to hide one (5)
15 Insufficiency — this shouldn't hurt you *too* much? (9)
17 Various seaweeds, any having to thrive on tidal waters rising (9)
18 Fibrous material most excellent in a marine emergency (8)
19 Girl (a gate-crasher?) with old instrument cases (7)
21 To go about day long — as a barrow wheel (7)
22 Clue one in with mouth open wide (5)
24 Take cover in snow — that's cool (5)
26 You need minutes to imitate one (4)

Solution to No. 1369

W	I	N	E	G	L	A	S	S		C	H	A	P	S
A		I		R		R		T		H		S		U
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F		E		N		E		I		C		E		T
T	A	R	R	Y		S	T	O	C	K	I	N	G	S

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Closing Date: **12 February**

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Application form and further details available from the Area Personnel Department, Liverpool Area Health Authority (Teaching), Orleans House, Edmund Street, Liverpool, L3 9NG. Closing Date — Friday, 13 February 1981.

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The Department offers six MA schemes to graduates (and, exceptionally, also to mature students with appropriate backgrounds). All schemes involve taught courses, examinations, and a research element in the form of a short thesis, all to be completed within a twelve-month period. Arrangements for part-time study (pro-rata fees) exist.

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Details to: The Chief Adminstrative Officer
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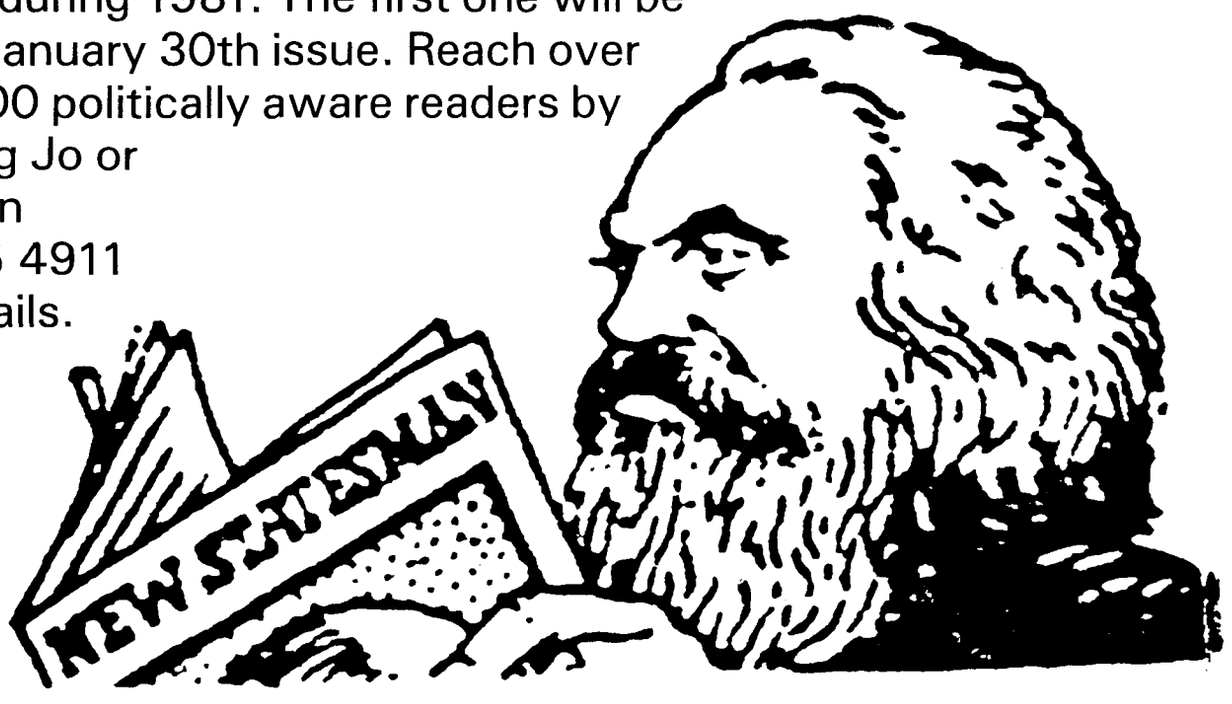

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Conferences

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Details and application form from –
The Conference Officer
Royal Institute of Public Administration,
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Imperialism, Peasantry, People's History, Labour Party and Social Democracy, Labour Party and Trade Unions, Labour Movement and Education, Labour Movement and Unemployment, Labour Movement and Defence and Disarmament, Teaching History, Trades Councils and their History.
Please contact **Andy Durr, 235 Ditchling Road, Brighton, by 7 February.**

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RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE Sunday lectures on religion and philosophy. Enquiries 06285 26464.

ROY HATTERSLEY speaks at Labour Party Special Conference lunch-time meeting, 12.30, Eurocrest Hotel, Wembley, 24 January. Organised by Brent & Camden Fabian Societies. Details: Mary Goudie: 01-435 6914. *John Lovatt: 01-908 0169.*

'SOCIALISM FOR MILLIONAIRES'. Talk by Leslie Jones, Shaw Society at Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., WC1. Coffee 6.30 p.m. Lecture 7 p.m. 30 Jan.

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for pamphlets, book list, programme. Sun. 25 Jan. 8 p.m. Open Q/A Meeting 'The Mystery of Man'. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, Gower St, WC1E 6BT. Lunch-Hour Lectures, 1.20 to 2. 27 Jan. 'The Physics of the Scottish Bagpipes' by Dr A. L. Allan and Mr C. D. McEwen; 29 Jan. 'Twenty-one Years of Nature Conservation at University College London' by Dr A. Warren.

THE ARABIAN GULF

Its Arab Character and Persian Ambitions: Dr Mahmoud Ali Daoud and Dr. Muhammad Al-Adhami. Chairman Mr Nejdat Fathi Safwat on Tuesday 27 Jan. 1981 at 7 p.m. at

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Theatres

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NATIONAL THEATRE. 928 2252. Olivier (open stage) 'The Romans in Britain' (not suitable for children), 'Man & Superman', 'Othello'. Lyttelton (proscenium stage) 'Watch on the Rhine', 'The Provoked Wife'. Cottesloe (small auditorium) 'The Nativity'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 928 2256.

OLD VIC. 928 7616. cc 261 1812 'S'. Until 14 Feb. Mon.-Sat. eves. 7.30 p.m., Mats Weds. & Sat. 2 p.m. 'The Relapse' by Sir John Vanbrugh.

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Holidays/Travel . . . see also pages 26 & 27

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